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# THE BOLSHEVIK THEORY



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BY

R. W. POSTGATE

SOMETIME SCHOLAR OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD



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# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	9
I. WHAT IS BOLSHEVISM ? . . . .	13
II. CONTROVERSIES . . . . .	28
III. THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT	36
IV. ON DICTATORSHIP . . . . .	42
V. THE TWO ROADS . . . . .	57
VI. THE PEDIGREE OF BOLSHEVISM . .	71
VII. EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS . . .	86
VIII. SYNDICALISM, BLANQUISM AND BOLSHEV- ISM . . . . .	97
IX. KARL KAUTSKY . . . . .	106
X. INDUSTRIAL PACIFISM . . . . .	119
XI. THE SOVIET . . . . .	131
XII. THE FUTURE OF THE SOVIET . . .	152
XIII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	169
ADDENDA . . . . .	171
APPENDICES :	
I. NOTE TO PAGE 58 . . . . .	178
II. THE NEW COMMUNIST MANIFESTO . .	175
III. N. LENIN: THESES PRESENTED TO THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AT MOSCOW, 6TH MARCH 1919 . . . . .	201
IV. THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL AND THE I.W.W.	217
V. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE . . . . .	238



## INTRODUCTORY

THIS book is no doubt in need of an apologia. Bolshevism has become so much a party word, so much a mere term of abuse, that it seems impossible to discuss Bolshevik ideals in the abstract. The dust and animus of conflict which oversteps all national boundaries almost forbid a calm appraisal of theory. Any discussion is apt to be stopped by a violent controversy over facts—such as what happened in Yaroslav, whether Trotsky is a Jew, and such irrelevancies—of which both sides are ignorant, and, moreover, draw their information from sources which their opponent regards as lying.

But it is worth while attempting to understand why the Bolsheviks are revolutionaries, and what are their aims and principles. Even hatred will find it worth while to see clearly. And if there is a possibility of conciliation and peace, it can only come by understanding. The Soviet revolution is of one kind in Russia, Hungary and Germany. Its supporters in England, America, France and Italy hold the same theories, use the same words and think in the same manner as the Moscow Communists. At any time the fire in your neighbour's house may spread to yours; or, if you will, the slaves on your estate too may break their chains. Knowledge alone can protect you.

The Bolsheviks are strange revolutionaries. For they do not inflame the courage of their sectaries

merely by abuse, like many propagandists. They are more concerned that they should study and be masters of difficult theories, should be able to discuss the concentration of capital, surplus value and such seemingly absurd and distant dialectical puzzles. Marxist debates, and Marxist debaters in the patience and abstruseness of their discussions, seem sometimes to bear a fleeting but haunting resemblance to the Jesuit Fathers. Was there ever before a revolution based on three vast and almost unreadable volumes on a dismal subject? Yet it is no exaggeration to say that the Soviet revolutions are founded on Marx's *Das Kapital*. Evidently they are worth understanding, if only as strange phenomena.

Others must write the history of the Russian and Hungarian revolutions. We are here concerned not with the circumstances which enabled the Bolsheviks to carry out their programme but with the programme itself. Nor is it possible to write the history now. It may be generations before we can know the bare facts. Even after a hundred years the French Revolution, a similar if less widespread upheaval, is still a matter for controversy. Therefore, in quoting examples, I have done my best to refer only to generally admitted facts.

This book is neither pro-Bolshevik nor anti-Bolshevik. It is a mere exposition. It is true that a certain amount of intelligent sympathy is necessary for the understanding of a point of view. The marks of some such sympathy may be traced in this book. This is inevitable, for it is merely the reflection of the author's belief that Bolshevik theories are neither inhuman—which seems to him clear—nor logically ridiculous—which they certainly are not. If these



assumptions are not correct, then Bolshevism is not worth considering.

A lecturer who sets out to discuss a theory with the intention of proving that theory absurd is merely indulging in a subtle form of counter-propaganda. His first duty is to make that theory seem coherent, reasonable and not outrageous to common-sense. If he fails to do this, then he has not understood the theory from its adherents' point of view—that is to say, he has not understood it at all.

If in the pages that follow there is too much elephantine argument to explain the obvious, this must be the author's excuse. And there are, after all, many people to whom "Bolshevism" has come as an unaccountable explosion, who know nothing whatever of the underlying assumptions of the revolutionaries. To these some apparently superfluous discussions may be of use. If the author has succeeded in dissipating any illusions, in clearing the air at all, or in diminishing in any way the atmosphere of a dog-fight which surrounds this subject, he will be amply repaid.

*"To end the domination of capital, make war impossible, wipe out state boundaries, transform the whole world into one co-operative commonwealth, and bring about real human brotherhood and freedom."*—  
Aims of the Third (Moscow) International, as stated in the Manifesto.

*"The Jews in Vilna were shot down, it is true, but then they were Bolsheviks."*—Reported defence of a Polish general.

# I

## WHAT IS BOLSHEVISM ?

THE two quotations at the beginning of this book explain much of the difficulties that have arisen about that mysterious thing "Bolshevism." The manifesto of the Communist Party gives the nominal aims of the Bolsheviks. It expresses the opinion of the Socialists present at Moscow in March, 1919, and the belief of the thousands who wished to have been represented there. "Human brotherhood and freedom"—it sounds so idealist and reasonable. It has the quiet peace of a Sunday afternoon, the gentle tone of a Quaker meeting. Only, one feels, the bitter violence of an unjust and wicked world could stimulate these Bolsheviks to so much as an angry word.

And then there is the Polish general, who considers that a Bolshevik is just a person to be killed at sight. He is outside the pale and dispossessed of human rights by his own act. It is not murder to kill him. One feels this sentiment, compared with those aims, is extreme, even for a general—even for a Polish general speaking of Jews. Has the Quaker meeting become a collection of homicidal maniacs ?

Some explanation must be found of the contradiction between the professed aims of the Bolsheviks and the frantic unreasoning hatred of the Polish general and his like.

If we turn hopefully to the examination of the word "Bolshevism" itself, as is the orthodox and

proper manner, we are not likely to receive much help. Bolshevism, etymologically, is derived from the Russian word "Bolshevik," which indicates a member of the majority. "Bolshevik" is the equivalent of the French "Majoritaire" and has no connection with the word "Maximalist"—a different word referring to a different party—or with the "maximum programme." Hence "Bolshevism" is presumably the policy of belonging to the majority in politics. It can be found, therefore, properly outlined in *The Pickwick Papers*:

"Don't ask any questions," said Mr Pickwick. "It's always best on these occasions to do what the mob do."

"But suppose there are two mobs?" suggested Mr Snodgrass.

"Shout with the largest," replied Mr Pickwick.

Now this is a very ancient and honourable policy. But it is not a revolutionary policy, and it is certainly not the Bolshevik policy. Etymology will not really help us in discussing the matter.

Bolshevism can be defined quite simply. Bolshevism is Socialism now—"Socialism while you wait, or rather, while you won't wait," as it has been phrased. It is the policy of the realisation of Socialism within the briefest possible period. "Communism," the title chosen by the adherents of the Moscow International (the Third or Bolshevik International), conveys to English-speaking people a wrong idea. It has for long been appropriated to a system of rigid community of goods, such as that described in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, as opposed

to Socialism as commonly understood. This is, of course, not the aim of Bolshevism, which merely demands the annexation, in one manner or another, of all forms of private capital by the community.

It is perhaps unnecessary to stress the fact that Bolshevism means Socialism, though there are people who speak of Bolshevism as "revolution for revolution's sake," and of mere "unrest" as though unrest was possible without a definite objective or a definite grievance. It is the demand for "Socialism *now*" that gives Bolshevism its individual character. But in these two words there is a whole history of argument and division.

Ever since the fall of the Paris Commune—and indeed traces may be found earlier—Socialism has been divided into two currents. There have been two parties whose ultimate aims have been the same but whose tactics have differed. Not all the patient attempts at unity have prevented the same split appearing in all countries in which Socialism has become a force of importance. The two sides take various names—Revisionism or Reformism as opposed to Marxism, Evolutionary as opposed to Revolutionary Socialism—but the fundamental difference is the same.

The party of the Right in England was for a long time connected with the name of the Fabian Society, and Mr Sidney Webb remains its most distinguished and able representative. The other side is contented with the label of Marxist, and, in America, is largely under the influence of Daniel de Leon.

The professed aim of the Right, and of such Centre parties as the Independent Labour Party in England, is the capture of Parliament or Congress by the usual



electioneering means and the gradual obtainment of Socialism by governmental measures, piecemeal nationalisation and so forth. They assume that the theories of ordinary bourgeois democracy are in the main correct, and that society is in fact an aggregation of units, of citizens to whose unbiassed intelligence it is possible to appeal, and that this is the only possible and correct method of attaining Socialism. This involves in practice the running of parliamentary candidates, in the ultimate hope of attaining a majority and realising Socialism by means of Government Departments. In the meantime a long and detailed programme of ameliorative measures for the workers is elaborated and forced upon the Governments of the day by pressure of public opinion. When, as in Australia, a parliamentary majority is secured, these reforms are realised and a process of gradual nationalisation is begun. Industries, by a theory not carefully elaborated, are supposed to become ripe for nationalisation in turn and to fall as the fruits of victory into the lap of the victorious democracy—whose victory, in any case, has only been over itself.

This policy, in its extreme form, has undeniably certain unpleasant features. Propaganda by the sterile methods of electioneering is so wearisome and unending that it becomes obvious that many of the useful reforms upon the party programme can be easily obtained by pressing them individually on the attention of the Government, and particularly the permanent officials of the Civil Service, without reference to the general programme. This process easily degenerates into a mere whispering into the ear of the governing classes, or “permeation” in the Fabian

phrase. It is also fairly clear that the Government and the governing classes are not likely to be persuaded into conceding anything but what is likely to strengthen their own rule. Thus, however disinterested the party leaders are at first, they gradually degenerate into mere political "wanglers" and become, in the worst sense of the words, parliamentary politicians.

The group having become obsessed with the details of reform, it naturally is soon far more occupied with the iniquities of the Poor Law than the iniquities of the capitalist system. The old phrases about the destruction of the capitalist system, the abolition of wage-sharers, persist, but actually they are devoid of meaning. A Reformist does not desire the fundamental upheaval of society ; he desires the mending of the old order so that it may live. This has obviously been the fate of the party of William Liebknecht himself, the German Social Democrats.

Undesirable also is the tone which the Right begins to assume towards the worker. Such societies as the Fabian, for example, which have attended particularly to measures for the benefit of the most wretched and degraded workers, insensibly assume the attitude of a charity organising society, and their Socialism becomes a State Capitalism, imposed upon the workers from above, for their own good.

Nor does the life of the worker in the nationalised industries seem to be much freer or happier. He is lucky if he has not exchanged a slack master of limited powers for an iron despot of limitless resources.

Other objections might be raised, and much further discussion is possible of those mentioned. But there is one very evident point in favour of the evolution-

ists—their scheme does not involve an appeal to violence in any form. It avoids the shock to existing institutions which may lead to bloodshed. It is true that one must count against it the many lives of crushed and cramped misery during the slow extinction of capitalism, but these are of less moment than the lives which may be lost and the possible ruin of civilisation in a revolutionary upheaval which may lead anywhere. Therefore, *if* Socialism can be achieved by parliamentary methods, then the evolutionists are in the right on humane grounds.

Opposed to them is the school of revolutionary Socialists, whom it is now fashionable to call Bolsheviks, but who have existed for decades under the less grim and sensational title of Marxian Socialists.

It is not possible to give here an adequate summary of Marxism. Marxism is not merely a theory of Socialist tactics. It is a materialist philosophy. It is also an elaborate, if rather antiquated, system of economics. It is an interpretation of history. It is a political philosophy. It does not touch natural science or mathematics; but there is hardly another subject, from Totemism to the origin of Greek tragedy, on which the pure Marxist does not have a distinctive and, at times, rigid and unintelligent point of view. He lives entirely in a different world from that of his Revisionist opponent. The motives of his adversaries seem different, the results and reasons of their actions diverse, the history of his country and the world are unrecognisable.

It is not necessary to transcribe the details of the Marxian scheme here. Vital conflict with Revisionism occurs really at only one point—the theory of the class war.



There are fundamental beliefs upon which both sides would agree. That the actual producers of wealth are robbed ; that the wealth of the world is "cornered" by a relatively small class of idlers who are either grossly, insanely overpaid for the services they render to the community, or else entirely parasitic and living upon shares, their estates, etc. ; that the wage-earners are enclosed in a vicious circle which prevents them bettering their position under the present industrial regime—all this is too obvious to provoke disagreement. But whereas the Fabian dwells almost exclusively upon the saving of time and material under a properly organised Socialist state, thus appealing to the sense of the community as a whole, the Marxist looks at the problem from the point of view of the workers as a class. The matter at once assumes a different aspect.

The workers, or, rather, the proletariat,<sup>1</sup> are an oppressed, an enslaved class, faced with a definite class of oppressors and exploiters, who hold them down, partly by direct deception and unconcealed force, partly by the suppression and discrediting of those leaders and thinkers who must necessarily begin the work of freeing the proletariat, by propaganda and destructive criticism, before the proletariat can free itself. This they can easily do, having in their power the Press, all the organs which form public opinion, education, industrial power, and the money which gives them as a class the power to

<sup>1</sup> The "proletariat" is the proper Marxian Socialist phrase. We will consider later what exactly is meant by the "proletariat," and whether there is, in fact, any such class at all, which has been questioned. For the moment we can assume it, vaguely, to denote the wage-earners.

starve any society or medium for the expression of opinion which seems to them undesirable, and liberally to endow those which support their power.

In an average capitalist society of to-day, that is to say, the Marxist sees only two classes of importance, and in their conflict the basis and origin of all the social and political events of the day—the employing and employed classes. More vaguely, those are spoken of as the upper and lower classes, or, in a rather unfair propagandist phrase, as the idle exploiting class and the working class. Technically they are called the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Each class, particularly the former, has classes which adhere without being part of it—the salariat in its lower grades, the slum proletariat and the drifting and destitute population as a whole in the case of the workers; the great bulk of small employers, of professional men and people engaged in luxury trades and in directly serving the rich in the former case. Nevertheless the only social reality of importance is the conflict between the two main groups.

If we look upon society as a whole, from the Marxist point of view, we see a series of wealth-producing industries, whose products are grossly and unequally divided. The wealth in any given industry is produced by the wage-earners, with the aid of machinery, made and repaired by wage-earners, from raw materials got and garnered by the labour of wage-earners. The market value of these products is never returned to the workers. Each industry has to pay a steady and unrelenting tribute of three kinds—rent, to the owner of the soil and buildings; profit, to the manufacturer—derisive word!—and interest, to those who lent the capital originally.

This tribute, being saved up, forms capital and is used for the purpose of extorting fresh tribute of the same kind from fresh industries. The classes who subsist on this tribute are as useless as the Romans of the Empire. They appear to the Marxist as a vast parasitic growth. It is true that occasionally the owner of a factory performs useful managerial work. But this is merely a fortunate accident, not a necessity of the system. And most of his work is socially useless, as it consists in pushing his wares by advertisement and attempting the ruin of a competitor, or in financial operations which may be actually harmful. However, with the growth of the practice of shareholding, and of employing salaried managers, the remnant of the social usefulness of this class is fast disappearing.

The workers can only eliminate this class, and receive the product of their labour, therefore, by destroying private capital as an institution and taking over industry as it stands, raw material, machinery and all. To do this they must fight an actual class already in possession. Their struggle to comprehend the necessity of this, and, later, their struggle to achieve it, gives rise to the class war.

This conception of industrial life as a daily struggle is also a historical conception. Class struggle is the only principle upon which history can be explained. For example (according to the Marxist), in the French Revolution we perceive the overthrow of an earlier class domination, that of the feudal nobility, by the bourgeoisie, peasants and workers. In the uprising class, which was also fighting a class whose social utility had ceased and which fell for that reason, the latent divisions were not yet clearly seen. But after

the bourgeois victory, which cleared the way for the operation of national industrial capitalism of to-day, the division between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie began to be acute. The bourgeois revolution not being complete, except in England (after 1832), the bourgeoisie and workers rise again in 1848 ; in the moment of victory the two parties come into violent antagonism and the revolutions are defeated.

However, the analysis continues, after '48 it became perfectly clear to the governing classes that the rising industrial capitalist class must be admitted peaceably. Thus without a struggle the framework of all the various European states except Russia was modified to suit the needs of the bourgeoisie, now their masters, and there is no further instance of a "bourgeois revolution." America, never having been cumbered with a feudal nobility, had no need for such a revolution.

The proletariat, thus left to its own resources by the victory of the bourgeoisie, becomes the sole revolutionary force. Its victory is the final victory, since there is no further submerged class to rise and oust it. With its victory and the establishment of Socialism, classes and the class war will end and the real history of humanity will open. We can see—in pursuance of this Marxist view of history—the first uncertain tentative revolt of the proletariat in the Paris Commune ; it gathers strength and wisdom in the long years of peace ; it rises and fails yet again in Russia in 1905 ; at last, strong and equipped, it finds victory in Russia in 1917. Russia—Bavaria—Hungary—with flushed cheek and sparkling eye the social revolutionary watches the new order struggling to birth, the proletariat beaten down in one place with mass slaughter, only to rise victori-



ously elsewhere. With happy confidence he salutes the dawn—the red rising of the sun so often hoped for, sung of, believed in.

For there is a strange, unreasonable fatalism in Marxism. It is a curious and, I think, totally unjustified belief that the victory of the workers is certain, that, historical evolution being on its side, the proletariat cannot be finally defeated. The capitalist dominion must end. Before the war the Marxist often anticipated the crash to come through a violent commercial crisis, though, as these crises diminished in violence,<sup>1</sup> owing partly to the growth of trusts, he later pinned his hopes on the growth of trusts and the concentration of capital. Like a new Caligula he waited for the time when his enemies would all have only one neck and could all be killed at once.

Even if the form of these facile hopes has altered, the substance remains. The Bolsheviks of every country speak as men confident of ultimate victory. The orthodox Marxist books still end with a cry of triumph, such as Untermann's warning to the capitalists :

"Calmly and coolly we proclaim the doom of the capitalist system and of the capitalist class. Firmly and unflinchingly we herald the coming of the co-operative commonwealth of economically equal workers. Our voice is the conscious voice of history itself."

<sup>1</sup> In opposition to the expectations of the orthodox Marxist theorists. It was only later realised that the commercial crisis resulting from overproduction had given way to Imperialism, equally the result of overproduction.

“Let the masters take heed and prepare! Let them stop the wheels of history if they can!”<sup>1</sup>

This whole theory of history was first stated by Karl Marx in the preface to his *Critique of Political Economy*,<sup>2</sup> which deserves to be quoted for its intrinsic importance :

“The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, continued to serve as the leading thread in my studies, may be briefly summed up as follows :—

“In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will ; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they had been at work before. From

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Untermann, *Marxian Economics*, the end.

<sup>2</sup> P. 11 (Kerr Edition).

forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.

“In considering such transformations the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic condition of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, æsthetic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as our opinion of an individual is not based on what he thinks of himself, so we cannot judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness ; on the contrary, this consciousness must rather be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the existing conflict between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces, for which there is room in it, have been developed ; and new higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society. Therefore, mankind always takes up only such problems as it can solve ; since, looking at the matter more closely, we will always find that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions necessary for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.

“In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal and the modern bourgeois methods of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society. The

bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic form of the social process of production—antagonistic not in the sense of individual antagonism, but of one arising from conditions surrounding the life of individuals in society ; at the same time the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism. This social formation constitutes, therefore, the closing chapter of the pre-historic stage of human society.”

This theory, whatever may be thought of its philosophical form, has commanded a large amount of practical assent as an economic conception of history. But further discussion of it would lead into regions of historical and philosophical discussion remote from our present object. Suffice it that this theory is not only by far the most important part of Marx's contribution to Socialist thought, but is, in fact, the final basis of the revolutionary faith of to-day.

The actual Bolsheviks—that is to say, the majority fraction of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, now called the Communist Party—are in theory rigid and undeviating Marxists. In practice also they have carried out a programme of which undoubtedly Marx would have approved, although it would be folly to try and discover it by reading through *Capital*, or even the old Communist manifesto.

It is not, however, a misuse of words to speak of American, English and French Bolsheviks. The word has come to have a definite international meaning, and a Bolshevik International has been



organised, with branches in many countries. In the year 1919 it had minorities of the organised Socialists adherent to it in all countries and majorities in some. The Italian, Rumanian and Norwegian movements had passed over altogether. In Great Britain the Socialist Labour Party and the British Socialist Party adhered ; in America the Socialist Labour Party and part of the American Socialist Party ; in France the extreme "Zimmerwaldian" section, led by M. Lorient ; in Germany the Spartacists ; and in Hungary what was left alive of Bela Kun's Communist Party.

Of these various adherents the first to come were the live and intelligent Marxists,<sup>1</sup> such as the S.L.P. But there are many honest and apparently intelligent Socialists who profess rigid Marxism and who are utterly opposed to Bolshevism. Mr Hyndman and Mr Gregor Alexinsky, who published documents purporting to prove that Lenin was in German pay, are examples. It is also true that what separates M. Lorient from M. Renaudel is not the quality of their Marxism. The touchstone of Bolshevism is in the words "Socialism now." The Bolshevik is prepared to initiate a revolution at the earliest opportunity ; his opponents are not.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As distinguished from the inert and entirely unintelligent Marxists, represented in England by the—— However, there is no need to cause unnecessary pain.

<sup>2</sup> This division is found everywhere : even such small *ad hoc* propagandist bodies as the National Guilds League in England are in danger of being split by it.

## II

### CONTROVERSIES

IN order to permit of evolutionary tactics, and to make it possible to free the workers by a system of quiet and reasonable parliamentary agitation and peaceful propaganda amongst the general body of citizens, which must occupy decades at least, it is obviously necessary that the acuteness of the class war must diminish, and a state of reasonable peace take its place. This is an obvious postulate of those who found their hopes on the civic body as a whole and use such phrases as "appealing to the good sense of the whole nation."

This is absolutely denied by the Marxist and Bolshevik.<sup>1</sup> The acuteness of the class war is increasing, and must increase. The severe shortage caused by the war, of course, means a violent industrial crisis, and when the world's goods are failing the result is obviously a sudden intensification of the struggle to divide them more equally. But apart from this temporary phenomenon, Bolshevik theory holds that the class war must grow fiercer and that this is an inevitable process even under peace conditions, if those could be restored.

The reason for this is the process called in orthodox Marxian books the Concentration and Centralisation

<sup>1</sup> To avoid confusion it should be said that "Marxist" as used here refers to the vast majority of pro-Bolshevik Marxists, not the relatively few anti-Bolshevik Marxists already mentioned.

of Capital. Marx perceived that the units of capital were growing of themselves. Large businesses had a great advantage over small ones and drove them out. The saving in overhead expenses and the elimination of the vast quantities of waste involved in competition, of which the saving in advertisement expenses was only a small item, were so considerable that there seemed no limit to the growth of vast aggregations of capital. Eventually a small class of multi-millionaires would be left alone, facing a vast expropriated class of wage-slaves. It was further added by Marx himself, in most unequivocal terms,<sup>1</sup> that the wage-slaves could not improve their condition, which must grow worse and worse until it was absolutely intolerable.

This last contention was undoubtedly false. Relatively to the upper classes the position of the working class may not have improved, may even have worsened, but absolutely it has improved. Before the war it was obvious that the conditions of life in a working-class district in Great Britain were infinitely more civilised than they were in 1834 or even later. If we read, for example, Engels' work on *The Condition of the Working Class in 1844* we realise that we are reading of conditions that do not in fact exist to-day. The appalling picture there presented is fortunately no longer true to life.

The most important point of the theory of the Concentration and Centralisation of Capital has suffered less from critics. It has been subjected to violent attacks, intelligent and unintelligent, and has been freely described as exploded and discredited. These attacks, however, have damaged rather the

<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, vol. i., p. 661.

form than the essential substance of the Marxist theory, which, with certain reservations, may be described as still standing.

The critics point to the undeniable fact of the growing numbers of people with moderate incomes. So far from the middle class being wiped out, it is increasing. Moreover, the ownership of capital is not becoming the monopoly of a band of multimillionaires, but is becoming infinitely divided among shareholders, etc. In agriculture the day of great "Bonanza" farms is over and the small man has a definite advantage over the large. Thus, eventually, the class war will end with the establishment of a great class of small producers, employing very little labour. Each labourer will have a real hope, as in the Middle Ages, of becoming a small owner, and Bolshevism will be a back number.<sup>1</sup>

There is considerable weight in these objections. Prince Peter Kropotkin, for example, in his *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, seems to have proved that the small landowner can beat the big landowner at his own game. Vast Bonanza farms are wasteful things of the past, and the Marxist who is building his hopes on their extension is making a very risky calculation. But for the most part these attacks miss the heart of the Marxist argument. Marx's anticipation of a vast class of wage-slaves in naked antagonism to a tiny class of wealthy lords of capital has been falsified. But that was not the essential point. The essential point, for the revolutionary, is not the

<sup>1</sup> The more acute of the advocates of small proprietors—Distributivists, as they have been called—do not delude themselves, but admit quite cheerfully that they are "working against the grain," as Mr Hilaire Belloc says in his book, *The Servile State*.



*centralisation* of capital in a few hands but its *concentration* into vast masses.

This is undoubtedly a fact. The very growth of a shareholding class, which so pleasantly weights the anti-Marxist's figures, is a proof of this concentration. It is the company, and not the independent producer, that is the standard unit in nearly all the lesser trades to-day, and in most of the greater. In the greater the multi-millionaire himself is to be observed. We must also note that many nominally independent firms are dependent upon greater concerns and practically mere branches. When we proceed to consider trusts, rings, cartels, interlocking directorates, and the many cases in which one capitalist owns a controlling voice in several apparently independent and unrelated concerns, we are amazed at the rate at which capital is becoming an aggregate of vast units in practice under the control of small groups.

The importance of this from the revolutionary point of view is very great. The great English eating enterprises—Lipton's, Lyons', the Express, A.B.C., etc.—are all companies of the ordinary type—that is to say, nominally an aggregation of little capitals, and controlled by a swarm of little capitalists. But in fact the workers are faced not with a thousand employers but one great employer, the company, at whose head is the board of directors exempt from all but the most general control by the shareholders. The workers are as much thrown together in great masses, and the line of class conflict is as clear and acute as if the owner of the business was a multi-millionaire. Class conflict arises not from the existence of business magnates

but from the existence of great industrial establishments. The shareholders, as a class, can be ignored. They may be useful as strike-breakers, or as voters, but they have abdicated their power in industry.

Even in the case of agriculture the small producer finds it extremely difficult to stand alone unless he lives near a town and can exist by market gardening. In those countries, such as Ireland and Denmark, where the peasant proprietor has stood his ground, he has done so only by the virtual concentration of his capital through co-operative societies. Isolated, he is helpless: it is only when the vast number of petty capitals can be made to act as one mass that the peasant can succeed.

This reservation is, however, for Bolshevik purposes, unimportant. The existence of such successful peasant communities does prevent the growth of a real agricultural proletariat, and the revolutionary must reckon on the fact that his enemy can call upon the votes and the arms of the country-side to suppress a town revolution. A French Socialist revolution, for example, would find itself in serious danger of being ringed round and starved out by a furiously hostile country-side.

Finally, the suggestion is made that the whole process of the concentration of capital is on the point of being reversed. Electrical power will be so developed, it is suggested, that the manufacturer will be able to set his plant going by merely turning on as much electrical power as he needs from a municipal source. Thus, by the municipalisation or nationalisation of electricity the small manufacturer will be on the same footing as the great, since he can switch on as much or as little power as he needs at the same

rates as the big man. This is an interesting speculation, but as yet only a speculation, and seems to imply that the advantages of the large producer consist only in his command of cheaper power, which is hardly the case.

For the moment, therefore, the neo-Marxist theory holds the field. Holding that the class war is, firstly, the fundamental fact in society of to-day, secondly, that its intensity is increasing, the Bolshevik is free to argue that Socialist policy must be directed in accordance with these facts, must be a plan of campaign rather than a propaganda, and can then elaborate his chosen method of fighting the class war—the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

On this point has centred most of the bitter feeling excited against the Bolsheviks. It is also the central point of Bolshevik theory. But before we proceed to discuss it, one further subject must be considered.

One type of reader will be singularly discontented with this book. He will have read, or skipped, thus far, impatiently awaiting the beginning of the Denunciation. At this point, let us say, he can no further contain his indignation and bursts forth into an apostrophe:

“Have you not heard of the seventy thousand officers shot in Kieff by especial order of Trotsky? Do you not know that Mrs Browne, who has returned from Russia and was most civilly received at Denikin’s headquarters, says that the Bolsheviks are a band of criminals? Do you not know that life under them is impossible? Have you not heard of the Soviet Commission for Extirpating Expectant Mothers? What have you to say about the nationalisation of women?” etc., etc.

Such readers need not proceed any further. It is perfectly possible to hold that Bolshevism is merely an outburst of criminality. Soviet rule may mean only that, through the unaccountable inertia of everybody else, the criminal element in society has seized power and exercised it for the purpose merely of satisfying its unpleasant predilections in the way of murder, lust and robbery. But in that case Bolshevism is not worth considering as a political theory. It could at the most give material for a pamphlet by a professor of criminal pathology. To pay attention to the criminals' camouflage of their acts is sheer folly. To write a book like this is the act of an idiot.

Now obviously the author of this book does not hold this view. If we are to understand a revolutionary movement at all we can only do so by the exercise of a reasonable amount of sympathy and understanding. And the first postulate we must make is of the general sincerity of the revolutionaries. It is possible to gain a great deal of amusement from the files of the *Anti-Jacobin*. But it is not possible to gain any idea of what the French Revolution was all about. The propaganda of White agencies must be put down for what it is—the interested slander of *émigrés*. If we are prepared to admit that Bolshevism is an important international movement at all, we must refuse to take our information from its enemies and be prepared to admit that the Bolshevik rank and file at least have principles upon which they act, and inquire what these principles are and how they were arrived at. The incidental horrors of the Russian Revolution may be great, the crimes of certain Soviet officials very grave, but our Russian



information is very small and most contradictory. The most serious allegations, such as the "nationalisation of women" story, when investigated melt away. Our denunciation, if denunciation there must be, should be based upon an investigation of principles. If the principles are foolish and the methods advocated abhorrent to humane feelings, then there is room for denunciation. But one must assume in dealing with a large movement the sincerity of the rank and file at least. No argument is possible unless, for the sake of argument, you assume the sincerity of your adversary.

Therefore the rest of this book will not be written on the assumption that a Bolshevik is either a madman or a beast.

### III

#### THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

PROFESSORS have been described as the instructors of the human race. They have also been described in many far less pleasant terms, especially German professors. And there is a certain form of sabotage that any possessor of an Oxford degree attempts to apply to any argument. It is a demand for a definition of terms. Skilfully applied, this will protract an argument indefinitely and has saved many a learned sage from humiliation. For any argument can thus be reduced to a discussion of ultimates, of Reality or something equally unimportant which evades definition. This type of obstruction can be easily applied to the discussion of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. It has the additional advantage of implying that your opponent is incapable of clear thinking, and is loose and muddle-headed in his use of words ; and a covert insult is an enlivenment to any argument.

"Dictatorship," as a word, does not provide a good field for this side attack. But "proletariat" does. Define "proletariat." Is there such a thing as the proletariat ? Is it not a long and ugly word meaning nothing whatever ? "Produce your definition," says the really educated critic, "and I will produce a series of exceptions, deductions and difficult cases which will make it seem absurd."

Definition of terms may, of course, prove of the

very greatest value in a discussion. But it is in this particular case not of much value. There are certain sciences, such as mathematics, in which everything depends upon the exact and clearly understood use of terms. There are other branches of knowledge, such as ethics, where the terms used are so vague that they are practically incapable of definition. In an attempt to define one of them alone—Justice—Plato wrote ten books, in which he considered a vast number of subjects, and came in the end to no final conclusion. And the capacity of the various sciences for definition varies largely with the amount to which the incalculable factor of human action is introduced. It is possible, therefore, that since economics studies partly the production and exchange of goods which do obey ascertainable rules, partly the actions of men in the mass which do not always do so, that the most carefully defined system of economics can only be approximately correct. This may be the cause why such books as Marx's *Capital* seem inadequate and antiquated—owing, that is, to an attempt to reduce to the rigid terms of an exact science material which is not capable of so being treated.

However this may be, the professional inquisitor must be met. What is the Proletariat ?

There are obvious definitions which must be rejected. Proletarians would seem to be people who have no property whatever, and depend only upon their wage, when they can obtain it. But this is only true of the slum proletariat, a certain section of the proletariat which is, in fact, generally to be found in opposition to the real proletariat. Few workers are entirely without property ; they have generally some savings, and even the poorest worker's wife has

a china teapot. And once you admit that the proletariat contains elements not absolutely propertyless, the definition as a scientific definition is ruined.

It is even more unsatisfactory to attempt to define the proletariat as consisting of those who work for wages. There is no real difference between a wage and a salary. And boards of directors receive salaries and are not proletarians. Highly paid managers, and the professional classes, are not naturally considered members of the proletariat. Also, wages, taken as a test, excludes the free-lance journalist, who, poor man, is very often indeed a proletarian. If we take wages to mean merely remuneration for work done, Miss Marie Corelli receives that, and it would be a gross insult to describe the lady as a proletarian. It is, as a matter of fact, true that the proletariat is incapable of exact definition. But it does not follow that there is no such thing as the proletariat. Right and Reality are not easy to define, none the less they exist. And the working class is a fact even if its boundaries are shadowy and fluctuating. The proletariat defines itself in time of revolution and in the class war with sufficient clearness.

It defines itself by a process of exclusion. There are certain classes which are obviously not of the proletariat, certain classes which are problematical, certain classes which are clearly proletarian. And, as a matter of fact, in accordance with Bolshevik anticipations, the clearness of their division from the proletariat corresponds with the strength of their resistance to it. There is some hope of conciliating the semi-proletarian classes, none of working with the employers.

Totally excluded from the proletariat, of course, are those who live off rent, profit and interest. But there are many semi-proletarians, recognised and mentioned in the new Communist manifesto, who present a difficult problem. Are they of the proletariat? Do they dictate or are they dictated to?

First of all, to consider who they are. They can be divided into three classes, two of them socially useful. There is first the professional and highly paid industrial class. Doctors, for example, perform a useful work and receive remuneration, yet by their position, tradition and training do not belong to the working class. The same is true of lawyers and clergymen—at least, the latter part of the statement is true. Again, most civil engineers, the higher grades of the Civil Service, etc., are in the same category. Managers and the salariat generally are not to be regarded as servants of the capitalist, merely transmitting his orders, but perform an essential function in industry. All these classes are part of the proletariat by the work that they do, but divided from it by tradition and culture and by the high rate of pay they receive.

Then again there is the small working owner. He not only is his own manager but actually works in his business. He is both employer and worker. The general type is best exemplified in the peasant, who refuses either to disappear (at least in some countries) or to enter either of the Marxian categories. He also must be qualified as semi-proletarian.

Finally, there are the employees in luxury trades, who are parasitic. It is obvious to anybody that the footman, for example, is an entirely useless appendage



to the upper classes. But further than this, there are whole trades, such as jewellery and many forms of catering, which depend entirely upon the rich for their support. The employees are nominally proletarian, but in fact their employment forces them as directly on to the side of the capitalist as the average proletarian is placed on the other side.

These sections constitute a difficult problem for the Bolshevik. The last section must be re-employed as soon as possible. There is no way out. This class must be counted as a battalion on the enemy's side. The peasant and small owner may perhaps be let alone if he is content to remain quiescent. Socialisation, when the main victory is won, can be applied gently in these regions.<sup>1</sup>

For the first class, tactics will vary with the individual Bolshevik. The unthinking revolutionary will damn the lot; the revolutionary who realises that a single scientific expert is able to wreck a whole industry will make many sacrifices to entice it over. In Russia the bourgeois expert is permitted to join in Soviet elections if he accepts the ordinary rate of pay current; he is permitted to stand out for a high remuneration and so dissociate himself from the proletariat at the expense of his franchise. This would seem a reasonable *via media*.

These, however, are minor questions of detail. The main fact in the dictatorship of the proletariat is

<sup>1</sup> But probably the peasant and small owner will not remain quiescent. Communist Budapest and Munich were ringed round by peasants sullenly determined to starve the Soviets out. But that was possibly just the narrow selfishness of the peasant who had been doing the same thing all through the war. Mr H. N. Brailsford's *Across the Blockade* gives a clear exposure of this attitude.

the exclusion of the exploiting classes and those who join them from a share in the control of the community. This is temporary, since Communism will (*ex hypothesi*) end by destroying all classes. But in the meantime they will be treated not as citizens but opponents—humanely so treated, no doubt, and not outlawed, but yet definitely regarded as opponents.

This involves the abandonment of parliamentary democracy. But if all the proletariat is on the revolutionary side the whole theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat seems unnecessary. For cannot the proletariat gain a parliamentary majority and thus snap the power of the bourgeoisie like a brittle stick ? <sup>1</sup>

The consideration of why the dictatorship is, according to Bolshevik theory, necessary demands another chapter.

<sup>1</sup> That is, presuming that the vanquished capitalists adhere to constitutional methods, which is not a justifiable assumption. Almost certainly the Socialist majority would have to meet violent resistance.

## IV

### ON DICTATORSHIP

THE <sup>1</sup> manifestos and pronouncements of the Bolsheviks very commonly speak in a tone inherited from previous revolutions. They are the phrases of a Liberal Government definitely based upon majority rule. In fact it would be possible, by careful selection from speeches, etc., to make a show of proving that the Bolsheviks as an international party do not contemplate the possibility of any such thing as a minority rule. They are confident that their rule is based upon the consent of the "majority of the people": it is possibly true that many Communists would be shocked at the suggestion that this was not so.

Obviously, however, it is only necessary, on Bolshevik theory, to have a majority of the proletariat. But the use of the terms, "the people's will," or even in careless moments "the majority of the nation" persists for other than historical reasons. If the

<sup>1</sup> One of the most intelligent discussions of the whole problem of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat has appeared under that title in the October, 1919, issue of *The Guildsman*. It was written by Mr R. Palme Dutt. From it I extract the definition of terms which seems to me the most adequate obtainable:

"*Dictatorship*—an extraordinary power for a specific purpose.

"*Proletariat*—the workers regarded as in conflict with the capitalist—therefore containing potentially all workers, including the managerial, but actually according to their alignment in the class struggle."

This is probably as close as is possible.



proletariat be understood in its widest sense, including its appendages—slumdom, the peasants and so on—which in some countries, such as Russia, outnumber the real proletariat—and this enlarged proletariat is Bolshevik, wholly or for the most part, then the Bolsheviks are actually a majority of the community. This requires no proof; the proletariat, if all the doubtfuls are admitted, is the vast majority of the community.

It is possible that in the swirl of a revolution all these doubtful elements can be swept in. The same result might perhaps be achieved by insistent and prolonged propaganda, given unlimited freedom of speech and practically unlimited financial resources. In such cases the dictatorship of the proletariat, which merely means majority rule, is exercised ruthlessly and questioned by nobody. For example, in the Russian Constituent Assembly the peasants and the workers were united so far as regarded exercising their united dictatorship against the landlords, who were expropriated instantly and without prediscussion. But the peasants—or rather the peasant deputies elected before the shifting of peasant opinion leftwards, as shown in the Peasant Soviet Congress—refused to return the kindness by handing over the industrial capitalist to the urban Soviets, and this led to the split between the Assembly and the Soviets.

Nobody disputed the expropriation of the landlords. Nor is it possible to dispute the right of the proletariat, in this sense, to dictate. Otherwise we are reduced to the abandonment of even Constitutionalism. For if we say that the dictatorship of the proletariat is in itself absurd or inadmissible, we have to admit that a small minority is to be permitted,

because it is the minority which employs and governs, to hold up the majority in its desire for a freer life at the expense of its exploiters. Socialism can only come by consent of the employing classes—which is hardly a hopeful outlook. We are reduced to the proposals of the excellent Mr Whitley for our means of progress. For even the veto of one employer will drive back into wage slavery ten thousand of his “hands.”

If this were all, the problem would be simple indeed. But, in the first place, Soviet power is not necessarily exercised by the majority. In a given case the votes may be nearly equally divided, and the votes of the excluded class would have been sufficient to turn the scale. If the “doubtfuls” hold aloof, and to them are added certain discontented elements in the proletariat itself, there are pretty certain to be occasions on which the decision will have been carried by a minority. It is also obvious to the careful observer that in all revolutions, at the critical moment, direction is actually in the hands of a minority.

Further, the Bolsheviks do not accept parliamentary forms of government even if they are in control of a majority. Their attack is now definitely against that form of government itself. They are not democratic; they are “ergatocratic,” to quote a new and singularly hideous word of Scots manufacture. The true-blue anti-Bolshevik explains this very simply: the Bolsheviks are opposed to Parliament because they know they are unable to gain a majority and that that pernicious form of folly and fraud called Socialism will never capture the electorate. Perhaps. And it may be replied from the other side that it is sometimes necessary to compel people

to be free. But apart from this wrangling, there is a serious case against bourgeois democracy that needs meeting.

It is partly stimulated by a vague discontent with the results of Parliamentaryism. Mr Belloc, in many of his essays and in his work on *The Party System*, has expressed this discontent. There is no name so contemptible as "politician." It is a synonym for shallowness, for dishonesty, for windiness, for incompetence. "In worse times," says Mr Belloc of a character (Necker) whom he wishes to brand as despicable, "he would have been a politician, and a parliamentary politician at that." And the thrust goes home. If we look round us to-day we can indeed find few people whose reputations more obviously exceed their worth than the politicians. Original thought, political enlightenment, material progress—to none of these have our contemporary party heads added one iota. What is done is done in their despite, and in despite of their followers, by the industrial lords, by the Civil Service heads, by the despised professors and authors.

How all the dirty devices of politics, the wangling and so on work, can be shown, for example, by a recent British election. In 1918 Mr Lloyd George secured a great majority. What was in the electors' minds no one can exactly say, but probably they voted largely (1) for hanging the Kaiser; (2) for severity to Germany; (3) slightly illogically—for a "14-point" peace and no more wars; (4) for no conscription and a general return to peace conditions. The majority being in power, the Coalition Government proceeded to carry out a programme which had never been before the electorate at all—war on Russia,

an attack on the trade unions, etc. It did not abolish conscription, did not produce a "14-point" peace, did not even (up to date of writing) hang the Kaiser. The astonishing thing, and the thing to observe, is not the fact that this was done, but that it was done perfectly easily and naturally, as an accepted thing and with a minimum of protest. When the trade unions threatened to intervene on the question of the Russian war they were told and apparently believed that they were in some way attacking the democratic will.

Various reasons are assigned for the rottenness of parliamentary government. Mr Belloc would heal it by the abolition of the party system, which seems, in fact, to be ineradicable, springing up again as soon as it is expelled. The Bolshevik case is that, as it is universal, its cause lies in the nature of the system.

Formal democracy is very simple. Its formulæ can be understood at a glance by an infant. All people come together and elect a representative who governs for them. There is no more to it. "Government of the people, by the people, for the people." It is indeed simple—too simple, almost childish. It is faulty because it is abstract. It is a universal panacea, devoid of preconditions. It will solve all the problems of all societies.

Democracy consists of counting noses—counting heads, if you will; anyway counting blank faces. Each person is assumed to be the same as his neighbour, the repetition of an unvarying unit. But the whole point of the Bolshevik theory is that the faces are not blank. The whole mass of Marxist theory, the laborious explanation of the class war considered before, all disprove it. It is, according



to the Bolshevik view, as absurd to talk of the two classes as a unitary whole as to poll two opposing armies with their camp-followers and the neighbouring country-side. There is not a real community between the tiger and the mild Hindu ; nor, if they are stood in a row and ordered to vote, is there likely to be any result but a pro-tiger majority. Real democracy cannot exist under capitalism. For real democracy presupposes the independent voter—a man who has access to truthful information and is unsubjected to pressure.

This person does not exist. The worker (and equally the non-worker) from his birth upwards is subjected to a continuous pressure. His thoughts are moulded by his environment. He perceives a society where one class is subordinate to another, and that class treated with deference and left in its position unassailed. His education is in the hands of the bourgeois state. The history taught him is a history which the Bolshevik will hardly dignify by the name. It is a foolish and meaningless string of actions of the upper classes. It is tolerable enough and not outrageously unfair in distant periods, if the student goes deep enough. But as the student approaches nearer to his own times he is still confined to crowned heads, the aristocracy and the diplomacy of the governing classes. Rarely will a liberal instruction make an apology for the terrible and brutal French revolutionaries, because they inaugurated Counting Noses. Too near his own time the student may not approach. Red Terrors (to adopt a convenient classification) are considered in detail. White Terrors are dismissed with a phrase about popular indignation.

When he grows up the power of independent judgment is entirely removed from him. The Press is simply a form of capitalist enterprise, and as such must inevitably defend capitalism and speak in terms of it. For Socialists to compete successfully with a Capitalist Press is not merely difficult ; it is entirely outside the range of possibility. The individual who arrives at a Socialist outlook must do so in face of all the facts, as stated unanimously by all his sources of information. And all this is true, and we have not yet considered the more direct means of pressure that can be applied to a dependent class !

The picture is too highly coloured, no doubt, but the argument can be reinforced very strongly in the Marxist class basis.

The Socialist—severely handicapped as we have seen—who sets out to convert the majority of his fellow-countrymen in the orthodox parliamentary manner has to work in a system which ignores class distinctions. But the class distinctions are there. We must see with what material the Socialist has to work.

There is firstly the employing class. This may be written off at once. The revolutionary Socialist is as welcome there as Dr John Clifford would be in hell. Then there are the parasites of that class : the shareholders and their wives, the employees of all luxury trades, and everybody, from the tip-cadger to the R.A., who depends upon the patronage of the rich. These also are barren ground, even if they are poor.

Two classes to the enemy. Well, there is the salariat. These, the managerial element and all the large section of educated workers who are out of the ruck of poverty and the scramble for ill-paid

jobs, are surely the ideal ground for the pacific Socialist. But as a matter of fact the Socialist who wants his Socialism within any measurable period of time has to say to the salariat: "Come to me and I will reduce your income and destroy your privileges." Just because his appeal to the proletariat rests in the fact that he promises them a better material life, he must antagonise the well-paid workers by telling them that their standard of life must be reduced. And this is what the most well-intentioned reformers have never been able to understand. That their cottage in the country, their motor and their grand piano must become things of the past middle-class reformers will not realise, for all their good will. "They will do anything for the poor but get off their backs." It was said of another class, but is true of this also.

Yet more hopeless is the task of the parliamentary Socialist when he enters briskly, with his canvassing card, the house of the small employer. He has to prove to him first of all that he is a phenomenon doomed to extinction and that he had best anticipate this by imploring the workers to take his business away from him. This is an impossible task. The small employer may admit that business is not very good for small men, but he always thinks that he is the man who will win out, even when others fail. He will turn to the Socialist when he sees bankruptcy at hand and not before. The peasant, also, understands with his narrow, tortuous mind only that his possession of his land is threatened. "A peasant socialist" is almost a contradiction in terms. And small men, both in town and country, are first and foremost opposed to anyone who wants to shake the



existing order, since any disturbance hits the little man first. So not only is the Socialist canvasser thrown out, but the indignant proprietor votes for his Grace's nephew, who is standing in the Union Jack interest.

Four classes to the enemy. But not yet necessarily a majority. However, the Socialist is lost, for the bourgeoisie will secure a section of the proletariat—the slum proletariat.<sup>1</sup> All the drifting, peddling proletariat, the proletariat that lives by petty thefts and evades work, is not class-conscious. Every human being below a certain standard of living, called by the casual economist “the poverty line,” is unresponsive to a revolutionary appeal. Such people may make a riot, not a revolution. A memory of better days may sometimes help, where it exists, but for those who have lived long in the abyss there is no hope. A life of petty dishonesties, of mad struggle for food, of long starvations and sudden drunken debauches, closes up the mind to any higher appeal. The ideals on which all Socialism ultimately rests have no meaning to a degraded mind. The slum proletarian cannot help the revolution: the aid of this class will prove its ruin. If rumour speaks truth, Munich fell for this reason. The slum proletariat will follow the existing power. It cannot reason. It is the trump card in the bourgeois hand.

Fifth and last class. “Now perhaps you see,” says the exulting Bolshevik, “who benefits by this

<sup>1</sup> Of course these classes are not rigid bodies acting in a mass. Exceptions will be found in large quantities in all cases. But these merely cancel out and do not affect the general argument and classification by classes.

business of Counting Noses." And fresh arguments, like the Oysters in *Alice through the Looking-Glass*, troop up at once.

Parliamentary methods have a disintegrating effect on a Socialist Party. This, from the Bolshevik point of view, has been proved time and again. The revolutionaries are ousted by the reformers as the power of the party and the number of its members grow. The German Social Democratic Party, when formed by a coalition of the Marxian and Lassalleian elements, was clearly revolutionary. As it spread and spread it lost its revolutionary character and became engrossed in certain particular reforms which it wished to force upon the Imperial German Government. When a severe test came at the outbreak of war, it failed in its allegiance to Marxian theory, which would have required it at least to remain neutral, and in the years 1919 and 1920 its majority was occupied in drowning in blood the German Revolution. The Italian and French Socialist parties are less touched with opportunism; but opportunism is present there, and would be worse if the parties before the war had not expelled members who had obviously become ordinary bourgeois Liberals. The British Labour Party is, frankly, a mere reformist, non-Socialist body. In fact, the revolutionaries only held to their faith and the Marxist erection was only undamaged in Russia, where a kind and benevolent Tsar saved his people from the poison of a Constitution.<sup>1</sup> And it did not

<sup>1</sup> On occasion the orthodox Marxist will speak of a republic as actually worse than an autocracy. Compare Marx's statement of the difference in *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, p. 50 (Kerr's Edition), where he speaks of a republic as naked class rule.

subsist entire even there, for the existence of the Mensheviks indicates a tendency to Reformism. Ultimately, as the Reformists grow and grow, the onetime Socialist Party becomes a Social Reform Party, and Socialism passes away from its reach. The class struggle is forgotten; the energies of Socialism are devoted to repairing the old order, so that it may last and not become intolerable.

The reasons for the death of revolutionary Socialism within a Parliamentary Party are not obscure. Any candidate in most constituencies is aware that he cannot be returned by the pure proletarian vote. Even if there are a number of seats in which the pure proletarian vote commands a majority, these do not constitute a majority in the House. If Socialists are to canvass with any hope of securing a majority, their candidates must adapt their views to suit the semi-proletarian elements, which hold the balance. Unless, moreover, the immediate programme of the party—the sole section of practical importance—is carried out in accordance with the desires and traditions of the semi-proletarians, the Socialist or Labour Party will find itself again in a minority.

The Reformists accept these conditions in practice and in their theoretic appeals for Socialism use arguments which touch the middle classes. For example, in Mr H. G. Wells' *New Worlds for Old* he makes great play with his example of the capitalist milkman. Seven firms and seven carts and seven deliveries may serve one street with milk. This could be done quite as satisfactorily by a single milkman under Socialism. These, and similar arguments, will appeal to all classes. But there is obviously a limit to this sort of argument. To appeal to the middle

classes you must evade the core and centre of the Socialist case. You must never mention the class war.

The middle class is that to which the Parliamentary must appeal. The slum proletariat is hopeless. It will vote for Mr Horatio Bottomley every time. And the demands of the middle class are fatal to Socialism in normal times. Small businesses are to be artificially favoured as against big ones. The "Labour" Party is forced into a continual and sterile agitation against trusts: a futile attempt to arrest the concentration of capital. This, in the eyes of the Marxist, is equivalent to an attempt to arrest the whole process which is leading to Socialism, when to it we add the fact that the support of the middle classes can only be secured at the price of disavowing all revolutionary tendencies, since a social disturbance brings the small man first to bankruptcy.

The tendency for revolutionary Socialism to disappear within the Socialist parties might be all very well, if it simply meant Peace instead of War. But ignoring the class war does not mean that it does not exist. Certain of the demands of the middle classes, as we have seen, are fatal to Socialism—fatal, in other words, to the end of the class war, which, as the most evolutionary Socialist will agree, is the thing to be eliminated.

At this point the Bolshevik generally gives a trick to his opponent. The orthodox Marxist talks still of the inevitable victory of the proletariat. As he says in all his speeches and writings, the proletariat may be defeated often, but never finally. Time is with it and the master class cannot win. If that is



so, there seems to be no adequate reason why parliamentary methods should be rejected. They are at least not violent, and since victory is certain anyhow, they might as well be adopted.

Unfortunately the Marxist who talks about the inevitable victory of the proletariat is talking foolishness. With the workers, unintelligent and unenlightened as they largely are, there is absolutely no reason why society should not end in a sort of capitalist feudalism. If, by keeping certain narrow, skilled sections of workers in a privileged position—as to-day they keep the managerial staff—the magnates of capital can use them to keep down the mass of unskilled workers, they are certainly intelligent enough to do so. Key industries may not exist; but nearly every modern industry is becoming more and more dependent upon experts which the capitalists can count upon. Certain of Mr Gompers' following might well become the Prætorian Guards of industry. So far from the State annexing the capitalists, the capitalists would annex the State. Furthermore, this happy optimism ignores, as nearly all Marxist theories ignore, the independent development of military science. Air fighting is beginning to make war once again the privilege of the skilled upper class. Nothing succeeds like success: nothing will defeat the proletariat and turn its individual units to the task of picking for themselves what they can save from the ruins but a series of defeats. There is only one final reason for the weakness of Socialism in France to-day, and that is the history of the months of May and June, 1871.

The chief argument against parliamentary action is advanced from other sources as well as by Bolshe-

viks—notably by Guild Socialists. They argue that to attempt to secure a primarily industrial revolution by political means is to attempt to use Parliament for a function of which it is incapable. They further assume—at least certain Guild Socialists do—that economic power always precedes political power; which is, however, not true in time of revolution. But the first point is of importance. All Socialists of the evolutionary type would work through Government Departments. Now one thing that is obviously proved is that Government Departments cannot run industry. There is nothing that comes so near to bringing the workers into line with their employers as the appearance of an official of the State. If the proposal to run industry by Government Departments is tyrannical and silly, the thought of Parliament controlling these departments is ridiculous. Parliament's control of the Ministry is at the best faint and vague. To imagine that six hundred odd members, elected as they are now, are going in addition to protect the interests of democracy in the newly annexed soap works of Messrs Jones in Huddersfield is singularly optimistic. The soap workers must do it. The battle of industry must be fought out on the industrial sphere: to try to transfer it to Westminster is to evade the question.

If, just for a fleeting moment, we envisage the possibility of sufficient good will and desire in Parliament to do so, we realise at once that it would be outside its power. Many have noticed of recent years that the executive has the control of Parliament. A very strong minister, backed by a united Cabinet, a firm majority and an incensed public, may be able to reduce a department to temporary



subservience and reverse its whole policy and habits. But this is rare and does not last. The department will in time revert to its old autonomy. It is generally impossible to reduce all the departments to subservience. A complete and efficient control by Parliament, or even Parliament's nominee, is out of the question. The very complexity, detail and localised character of the necessary work forbids it. The machine must run itself. And if six hundred politicians cannot control the present Civil Service, much less could they ever control the lives of forty-five million people.

## V

### THE TWO ROADS

THE theory of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" involves logically more than the exclusion of the employers from the list of voters. Since Bolshevik policy is based on a theory of class war, and upon the belief that the possessing class must be regarded as the enemies of the proletariat, circumstances will almost inevitably arise under which violent measures become necessary. In a land isolated from foreign interference, where the revolution was led by wise and firm leaders, it is possible that it might be carried through without any recourse to terrorist means. But it is unreasonable to assume that revolutionary leaders will always be wise and always gentle, or that a revolutionary crowd will never act in the provocative and violent manner in which ordinary crowds will act. Moreover, behind the strong and moderate leader is always the extreme Red Terrorist—the Hebert of Bolshevism—prepared to overthrow him and take his place when he shows signs of weakness.

It is improbable also that a "Bolshevik" revolution will be let alone. Bavaria, Hungary and Russia show one thing at least—that the governing classes in foreign countries will protect their fellows from attack. When the only enemy is the home capitalist, it is possible to be gentle and moderate; but when the Germans, for example, invade the Ukraine and

set up a Skoropadsky as dictator, support a White Terror in Finland and aid the organisation of the Krasnoff-Denikin army, then the bitterness of the class war will become intensified. Bela Kun will have to give way to Szamuely.

The first casualty under a proletarian dictatorship will almost certainly be freedom of speech. No country during the war found that it could do without a strict censorship. The advantages to civilian and military *moral* were too great to be lost: nor, if one was fighting for a principle, or merely for self-preservation, had one the right to throw aside such aid. In a revolution, when the war is not at the frontier, but in every home, the advantage of such censorship is even greater, and it will be used. The Press will almost certainly be shackled. If a capitalist neighbour attacks, using presumably methods of conscription, the revolutionaries will be forced to use conscription.

Of course there are certain definite limits. It is not possible really to limit freedom of speech in the sense of freedom of the spoken word. Not even in capitalist countries is this really possible. Governments during the war descended at random upon obscure persons for seditious utterances; but that they seriously hampered pacifist propaganda is doubtful. In any case they could not and did not detect and punish one-tenth of the seditious utterances which were made. For a professedly Socialist Government to undertake to do so would be not only foolish but self-destructive, since it is the last way in which to proceed to a Socialist state, which must ultimately depend upon revived consciousness and power of thought among the workers.

Again, such a government might be tempted to use spies for civil purposes. In this case it would undoubtedly fail. Within the ranks of its party, consisting of men who had suffered for an ideal, it would not be able to find the spies. It would have to rely upon the tools of the old regime, who would be worse than useless. Such examples could be multiplied, but, in spite of these limitations, it is clear that the traditional Liberal "freedoms" will be seriously impaired.

Mention should also be made of the "Red Terror," properly so called. But this is rather a different problem. Strictly, the Red Terror is a system of extraordinary penalties, including death, for conspiring to revolt, assisting conspirators or wilfully hindering the revolutionary government during the prosecution of an actual war. It is really a proclamation of martial law. Its defence is merely that. If the war has been forced upon the revolution, then the Terror is as justified as the war, because, with a fiercely inimical class within the borders of the country, war cannot be carried on without martial law. "Terror" is not specifically Bolshevik means. It is merely the handmaid of war. It has no claim to the adjective "Red." There are White terrors which are far more widespread and fearful, because the White's enemy is not a handful of exploiters, but the whole mass of the class-conscious proletariat. There was Terror during the French Revolution, before Bolshevism was born or thought of. There is Terror behind every fighting line in every war. Its bitterness varies directly with the amount of turbulence and disaffection at home.

A very grave and serious indictment can be made

out against the use of Terror. But it must be made out not on the grounds of the Terror's own evilness, but on definite Tolstoyan grounds. It must argue that Socialists, seeking a new world, should never have recourse to the weapon of war. For it must be allowed that if they are to make war and kill, they must be prepared to do so efficiently.

But the picture can be further darkened. The liberal tradition and heritage of prediscussion, of hearing the other side and abiding by the decision of the majority, is a hard-won thing and not a mere trifle to be cast aside lightly. The common everyday personal liberties of action, speech and writing, the chief gains of the French Revolution, have become almost an instinctive part of our daily life. To reject them summarily will seem to many a mere return to savagery. Some objectors, of course, will be content merely to say, "Look at Russia," but this is not adequate. We have not the facts before us and are almost forced to join one of two ill-informed sects, which say "Soviet Russia is heaven" and "Soviet Russia is hell" respectively. Nevertheless it can be justly objected that the total abandonment of an ideal, however imperfectly carried out, an attempt at least to found politics on a basis of discussion and compromise, leads to the ruin of political life. The moment one ceases to say, in the words of the Quaker, "Let us reason together," the appeal is to mere force. It is an inverted militarism. The open use of violence leads directly to secret conspiracies—a civilised community is plunged back into the atmosphere of assassinations and secret cabals.

Not even (says our objector) in the industrial



world is any gain certain. By the necessities of the case the Bolshevik is inaugurating Socialism before the whole of the masses has become Socialist. Certain sections of them will be in open opposition ; still larger portions will not have reached the Socialist outlook. In practice, therefore, these sections will have to be driven to work. They will be subject to an industrial tyranny worse than the unintelligent despotism of an employer, since it will be exercised by a live organ, the Soviet. Means will be devised for speeding up their work in spite of themselves. Piecework, scientific management and even premium bonus return by a back door. Lenin is even now talking of the need to adopt the Taylorian system. Eventually, the end is a mere reign of force, a permanent Terror. Nor can you be sure that this force will always be on your side. Is this, says the Liberal, your Promised Land ?

The indictment is grave and by no means to be swept away in the easy manner which is characteristic of many propagandists of the Socialist Labour Party and similar organisations. It is very clear, apart from the vexed question of Russian conditions, that sympathetic and intelligent, if non-Socialist, observers, such as Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, were very considerably irritated and shocked by what seemed to them the unreasonable and unnecessary restriction of freedom in Hungary. Nor was he really consoled by the Communist who pointed out that his disappointment was due to the fact that he followed Bakunin instead of Marx. And the Bolshevik reply to Liberal criticisms cannot ultimately lie in explaining away or denying the destruction of the liberties established by bourgeois democracy, or in



ignoring the danger of fatal results. It can only consist in a proof that through the dictatorship of the proletariat alone can the freeing of the worker be achieved—that otherwise worse evils will come upon us.

This is, in fact, the case presented to us. The Manifesto says :

“Humanity, whose whole culture now lies in ruins, faces the danger of complete destruction. There is only one power which can save it—the power of the proletariat.”

In fat and well-fed America and England it is difficult to appreciate these words. But everywhere east of the Rhine they carry a terrible meaning. Whole communities have come to the end of their life. The wanton and insane waste of the war has meant, not a shortage, but a famine. A famine, not of food, but of everything which is taken for granted in civilised societies. The societies which are to face this are composed largely of neurotics, of war cripples, of criminals brutalised by war, of senile Jingoists. In the shops of Petrograd Miss Louise Bryant observed plenty of nothing but unfashionable corsets and expensive orchids. Germany is a machine which has worn out. The power and the will to work has left the workers. There is nothing with which to purchase raw materials. The flood of ruin is reaching the middle classes—even the rich can hear its ominous sounds. Vast areas in the Ukraine and the Russian borderlands have abandoned the struggle and fallen back into barbarism. Petlura, Denikin, Makhno, Yudenitch—are they

heads of governments or brigand chiefs ? It is difficult to say—the difference is becoming so slight. The rule of the governing classes may continue, or all vestiges of a social structure disappear. It does not matter much which happens, for the result is the same. Whole sections of the people must die. Civil war will aid, but famine and epidemics will be the chief stages. The survivors in the mass will have forgotten what comfort, cleanliness, decency and safety are. They will have lived through famine and continual war and their minds will be limited and cramped by them. They are returning to the beasts. We remember how a plague in well-fed and wealthy Athens shook the whole fabric of Periclean civilisation. We know its effects on the master class : we can only imagine its effects on the slaves. The fate of the slaves and worse is to be ours.

If anything is to be saved from the wreck of civilisation in East and Central Europe and Western Asia, action must be taken at once. What little remains must be divided out upon the system of feeding the worker first. Nothing can be spared for the ornamental and parasitic sections of society. The ignorant and unwilling must be cajoled or driven into work. Whole classes who refuse to assist and attempt to restore their own prior claim on all the country's wealth must be thrust aside and may well be thankful that they are not deliberately exterminated as a useless exerecenee. Half the world is in collapse, and it is mere gibbering to talk of evolutionary methods, steady propaganda, postponing action until general agreement has been arrived at, and so forth. Evolutionary methods are not used to put out a forest fire.

But America, Britain and France for the moment are not faced with any such problem. They have time to consider, and evolutionary methods are not ruled out. Nevertheless there are Bolsheviks in all these countries, and they have a programme and a defence. It deserves careful examination.

We may put aside the arguments which first occur to the mind. It is commonly assumed that not only are "hard times coming" in the Western countries, but that such hard times are coming that these countries also will be faced with a danger similar to that facing Eastern Europe. Then, of course, the methods of dictatorship will be the only way out and the Bolsheviks vindicated. However, it is not at all certain that this is true. Famine in food and in all necessities may be largely staved off when you are in a position to corner the world's market. Plague, it is true, does not stop at political frontiers. But it is severely checked by good food and careful and expensive sanitation. In any case the Bolshevik hypothesis is a prophecy only, and cannot claim much more attention than *Old Moore's Almanack*.

Nor is it an adequate reply to state that these boasted liberties were never liberties for the workers, but only for their exploiters. Police surveillance, private and public persecution, and the organisation of public opinion, had no doubt before the war made vast inroads into the actual extent of freedom permitted to the workers. War was made an excuse for the unification and extension of these conquests. All the same these liberties are still, and before the war obviously were, of great value to the worker as much as to the idler. They represent the great

conquests of the French Revolution and "Forty-Eight"—the foundations upon which the Social Revolution must be reared. Freedom from arbitrary and indefinite imprisonment; permission to express in conversation, writing and, if you could afford it, print opinions not directly leading to a breach of the peace; the possibility at least of acquiring information and education from sources which were not directly controlled in some interest or other—all these were as essential to the growth of class-consciousness in the proletariat as they were to the development of its individual units from blind and unthinking serfs into living human beings of wide aspirations and endless potentialities. It was undoubtedly better to be a British worker than a Russian worker under the Tsar. The degradation of the Russian worker then, means now a continual fear that the Revolution will turn into a mere *jacquerie*.

But consideration of this point does lead directly to the Bolshevik reply which has the real bite in it. The curtailment and destruction of the liberties of the workers which have undoubtedly occurred have been but one of the signs of the passing of an old order and the coming of a new in which the workers' slavery will become riveted upon them. The multitudinous class of petty employers and traders who were the characteristic class of the Victorian Age in England, and who always everywhere had been the main support of a Liberal policy, has lost its throne. Industrial and therefore ultimately political power has been taken by the great magnates of capital, who by interlocking directorates, by the holding of a majority of shares in limited companies and such methods, have now in their hands the complete



control of all important industries. The old petty bourgeois has been thrust into obscurity in the outskirts of the less remunerative trades, or relegated to ignoble and powerless parasitism as a shareholder.

Rapidly, and in spite of glib assumptions that "the workers must win"—idiotic fallacy—the capitalist world under cover of parliamentary democracy is drifting into a well-organised feudalism. There is—*pace* the unbending Marxist—no reason whatever why society should not settle down into a capitalist caste system, in which the autocrats of industry and swarming gentleman idlers would be supported by the many enslaved. It is only necessary for them to give the workers in certain favoured and essential industries a privileged position, to get the Air Force and other unanswerable means of coercion in their hands, to have laid the foundations of a slavery which dynamite will not move. H. G. Wells, in a terrible and haunting prophecy—his novel, *When the Sleeper Wakes*—has written down imaginatively both the means and effect of this process.

We have already discussed the insuperable obstacles which Parliamentarism places in the way of Socialism. So long as Socialists work within the cadres of bourgeois society, nothing is possible but unessential reforms and a measure of State capitalism. Their successes will be limited by the veto of declining and effete middle class. Never can the proletariat free itself.

For this is the essential point. The Bolshevik aims not at destroying liberties but destroying a perfectly clear and most oppressive slavery, a wage-slavery. It is necessary to arrest a steady and



unrelenting tendency to an eternally unfree state. To demand that the Bolshevik should wait before he attempts this, to convince a majority of the slaves, slave-owners and parasites, is unreasonable. It is unjustifiable to speak of these actual classes as though they were free men in a free state ; units uninfluenced by anything but reason. The employers and parasites will oppose as a matter of course. Even the workers may not be all convinced. But it is not necessary to convince all the slaves before they are freed. The Prussian serfs presented a petition against their freedom. The majority of the negro slaves in America apparently viewed the change in their status with resentment. But that does not make Abraham Lincoln a scoundrel. If it is necessary, says the Bolshevik, in effect, to suspend in name freedoms that are actually disappearing in fact, in order that freedom for all may not utterly disappear but become a fact, then the sacrifice must be made in spite of the danger.

Ultimately the most essential part of the Liberal objection is not to the exclusion of the recalcitrant employing and shareholding class from the franchise. Most democratic countries exclude considerable sections of the community. Commonly a mere infraction of a capitalist law, often obviously obsolete and unreasonable, is enough to exclude one from the franchise, if it involves imprisonment. Till recently all, and even now many, bourgeois democracies disfranchised all or most of the female population. Great Britain has disfranchised conscientious objectors, and little comment has been excited. The ordinary man is not likely to be moved greatly to indignation by a proposal to exclude only those who

definitely and obstinately refuse to share in the work of the community. "Ergatocracy"—apart from the sanction of the New Testament—in itself can hardly be described as unreasonable or objectionable.

But the real argument which holds men's minds is rather the belief that, since Parliament, for reasons of history and tradition, holds the allegiance of men's minds, it represents a means of peaceful revolution, as opposed to a Soviet system, which involves violence and bloodshed. We most of us remember, among the lessons taught us in our childhood, one in which the British Constitution was compared with that of a South American republic, generally—but why does not seem clear—that of Venezuela. We were required to observe that in Venezuela no government (as we were informed) could ever be moved out except by a revolution, while in England Mr Balfour gave way to the Campbell-Bannerman Government without a struggle. This typified the advantages of an orderly parliamentary tradition. And the feeling that it does in fact make for peace is a strong, if declining one.

But it is rapidly ceasing to have any basis in facts. The chief reason why Mr Balfour so easily made way for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was that no serious interests were involved. Everyone knew that no large economic upheaval was contemplated, no real change in the relation of the classes. The matter assumes a very different aspect if a parliamentary assembly — supposing that it could — threatens the economic dominance of the bourgeoisie. The result then is, as Marx anticipated, a "pro-slavery rebellion." Parliamentarism no

longer means peace. The realities of the class war are too pressing to permit that. It means the slow and terrible paralysis of a Noske regime—the merciless slaying of the revolutionary movement by inches. It means administrative slaughter. It means that the bayonets of the State are thrown in the scale against the workers in any strike that threatens to become revolutionary. Belfast, Glasgow and Winnipeg in 1919 were examples of how this may happen in the British Empire ; the United States even before the war furnished many examples of the most outrageous Constitutional persecution of the workers.

It may be doubted whether, in modern times, Parliamentarism has ever meant peace. The numberless White terrors, the eternal vigilance of the police which is the price of tyranny, the continual suppressions all speak against it. One remembers the end of the Paris Commune—a handful of hostages shot, and then a week's massacre by the Versaillese and the butchery of thirty thousand Parisians. The lion lies down with the lamb, as the ancient jest says, only when the lamb is inside.

At the end of a debate, which might become interminable, there is a very serious problem to be faced. There remains a choice, and a very bitter choice. The forces of industrial capital have broken the bonds of formal democracy. The formulas of Thomas Paine and of Thomas Jefferson have become old. No valiant pretence that we are still in the days of Maximilien Robespierre will avail. Quoting respectfully the words of Marat, Friend of the People, is now useless among revolutionaries. The old freedoms are slipping from our grasp. The new freedom is more difficult every day. It is possible

to say that the evils and dangers of proletarian dictatorship are too great, and to fold one's hands in resignation. It is possible to urge that a great and painful effort, and a temporary sacrifice, is necessary and permissible. But it is wrong to hug old and outworn formulas and deny that the problem exists.

## VI

### THE PEDIGREE OF BOLSHEVISM

So much for the present implications of Bolshevik theory on the political side. Bolshevism, however, was not born in its completeness suddenly, and especially for our time. It has its own history and development as much as any other revolutionary movement. This history is at once longer and shorter than the average Marxist believes. He is content to date the appearance of the modern revolutionary Socialist movement from the appearance of the Communist manifesto in 1847; alternatively, considering the uprising of the proletariat, he will begin its history with Primitive Communism, a dismal state of society which has little or nothing in common with modern Socialism. In one of the latest Marxist books, Mr Noah Ablett's, the author starts with the nebular period!

However, not all our memories reach back as far as Noah's. If we regard the distinguishing character of Bolshevism as the assumption of temporary power by a revolutionary section—by the majority of that majority which is struggling for freedom; that is to say, possibly a minority—for the purpose of ensuring permanent freedom, we find its beginnings in the beginning of modern history—the French Revolution.

In France in the years 1789 to 1794 the Revolution was carried through by means of a dictatorship of



the uprising class. Only entire ignorance can excuse the assumption that it was the various Assemblies which made the Revolution. It was the dictatorship of the revolutionaries, and of a section of the revolutionaries : the people of Paris. This people began the Revolution by destroying the Bastille. It enforced the acceptance of the revolutionary principles as expressed in the Declaration of the Rights of Man by the invasion of Versailles in October, 1789.

The Assembly thus left in control by the action of Paris proceeds to oppose the completion of the Revolution. We have the absurd and outrageous spectacle of this Assembly passing a reactionary franchise law, suppressing the Left, particularly Marat, in the most ruthless manner, and applauding the extermination of revolutionary soldiers at Naney. So long as the Assembly was left to its own devices reaction had full swing. Only when the flight of Louis to Varennes gave room for a fresh popular revolt did the Revolution resume its course, and then only for a moment. The struggle between the Assembly and King was of less importance than the struggle of the Assembly with Paris. The revolutionaries had to take matters again into their own hands to affirm the principle of Republicanism on the 10th of August 1792. The Assemblies would never have made France a republic.

This is full of lessons for the Bolshevik. But as yet the revolutionaries could argue that in fact they represented the nation ; that they were really fighting the king and certain deputies who refused to carry out their mandate. Events forced the Jacobins—the exponents of the popular will on these points—to direct action against the Assembly itself to secure

the immediate demands of the people—the abolition of feudal dues, etc., and the annexation of estates in the country, and a thoroughly democratic constitution. This was accomplished by the purging of the Convention in 1793. After the attainment of these points the Revolution ends, for various reasons, but largely because the executive remained unconnected with the insurgent class.

However, Bolshevism was born. All through the Revolution one point emerges clear : the Revolution is not the work of the Territorial Assembly. This Assembly, which appealed to all classes, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary, was always prepared to stop the Revolution at the point it had reached, and not to make any further advance. The votes of the large class of people who refuse to be interested in politics, of those who have benefited so far by the Revolution and fear to lose again, of all those who feel their position precarious, can be secured by the deputy who can promise, with a show of plausibility, that the present gains of the revolution shall be retained, but no more disturbance shall take place. Order shall be restored, but the revolutionaries shall not be put down ; Liberty maintained, but privileges not attacked ; Equality is the aim, but private fortunes shall be left alone. When he comes to the point of attempting to secure the gains of the Revolution without taking any of the further steps necessary to secure them, he is helpless, and is naturally the tool of whoever will push him hardest. This will be Authority, and he will quickly come into conflict with the revolutionaries and even some of his own supporters, who, still holding to their former attitude, have merely added, just this once, another point to

the programme which they cannot fail to see is necessary.

If this was clear in France in 1792 it was clearer in 1848. In Germany we have exactly this Assembly again, desiring to perpetuate the conditions that obtained at its meeting. It did not wish to impair the royal powers, but wished to maintain the liberties and freer atmosphere which were the result of the German people's uprising. Consequently its action was as foolish as that of a conference, called during a twenty-four hours' truce to frame a peace, which attempts to secure it by prolonging that truce for ever. It was difficult to lose when the only enemies were the King of Prussia, a fool, and the Emperor of Austria, an imbecile. Only the Frankfurter Assembly could have done it. In France, in the same year, the Revolution was made by Paris again : unmade by the folly of the Assembly which let itself become a mere tool in the hands of reactionaries.

However, with 1848 we reach revolutionary Socialism. Previously, in the year 1847, was published the old "Communist Manifesto." This was written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and is accepted by the modern Bolsheviki as the direct precursor of their movement. It is not incorrect to describe it as the Bolshevik manifesto of the day. The following quotations are relevant to our purpose :—

"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. . . .

"The proletarian movement is the conscious movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority. . . .

"The first step in the working-class revolution is

the raising of the proletariat to the position of ruling class, the victory of Democracy."

The writers of the Communist manifesto were, however, academic Socialists. They were men of no weight in the French Socialist movement, the only one of importance. The French Socialist, Louis Auguste Blanqui, by far the most important revolutionary of the day, has the honour or dishonour of being the first to advocate a temporary dictatorship during the revolutionary period. In his *Critique Sociale* (not published till 1885) he outlines a programme of "immediate measures":

"*Economic Measures*.—An order to all captains of industry and commerce, under pain of banishment, to maintain provisionally in their existent state their staff and wage sheet. . . . A public trust to be substituted for any employer expelled for refusal. . . .

"*Political*.—No liberty to the enemy. . . .

"*Government*.—Parisian dictatorship.

"A recourse to an election immediately after the Revolution could only have one of two equally criminal aims: to capture the majority by violence or bring back the monarchy. This will be called an admission that we are a minority and violent. This is not so: the majority which has been obtained by terror and the gag is not a majority of citizens but a herd of slaves. It is a blind tribunal which for seventy years has heard only one side. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

The dictatorship of the proletariat in France meant Parisian dictatorship. This was so chiefly because of the bad means of communication and the depend-

<sup>1</sup> Seventy years—1797-1869.



ence of the Government upon the capital, but also because of the revolutionary tradition, which made the workers of Paris violently alive to their mission, and left the workers of the other large towns comparatively backward.

This was the explanation of the curious attempt at compromise made by the Paris Commune of 1871. Social revolutionaries were not yet so enlightened—or case-hardened, if you prefer—as to perceive the necessity of a transitory dictatorship. To detract in any way from pure democracy was repugnant to them. Nevertheless a territorial assembly was attempting to destroy them. A convenient way out presented itself. It was surely democratic to demand that Paris be permitted to arrange her own affairs if she also left the peasant communes to arrange theirs. So the Commune issued its defence in these terms, and incidentally gave room for the Anarchists, in after years, to claim the Commune as *their* commune.<sup>1</sup> But of course such a compromise was doomed to failure. A few Socialist communes in the middle of monarchism and capitalism could not live. The first act of the independent peasant communes would have been to recall their king and attack these atheists in Paris.

The fall of the Paris Commune meant the end of the First International, the collapse of Marx's personal dictatorship, and the indefinite adjournment of the success of the armed revolution. Were we speaking in terms of to-day we should say it meant the defeat of the Bolsheviks. For a long time evolutionary methods were, in fact, adopted and reforms along national and parliamentary lines

<sup>1</sup> See Kropotkin's pamphlet on the Paris Commune.



were the immediate objective, although, from habit and old custom, revolutionary phrases were still used. This is true of the whole period from the end of the Commune to the beginning of the war.

The old International—the First International as it is called—was a centralised body almost entirely under Marx's domination. It was in the nature of a semi-secret society to foment revolution. It was non-national, its national divisions were sections dependent on London, not national movements voluntarily federated. The new orientation of Socialism was exemplified in the character of the Second International. During the period between the fall of the First International and the constitution of the Second in the year 1889 strong national Socialist movements had sprung up, in practice evolutionary and Parliamentary in tactics. Thus the Second International was a loose federation of political parties in which the central organism was practically powerless. The national parties went their own way after general expressions of good will. During nearly half-a-century—from 1871 to 1914—these national parties had everything their own way. Reformism grew stronger and stronger, and was even stronger than its own advocates imagined. The theories of evolutionary Socialism for the first time appeared and were given a theoretical form.<sup>1</sup> Previously all Socialists had assumed that the master class would have to be expropriated by force—*vi* if not *armis*; now the Reformists were able to produce a theory of the peaceful attainment of Socialism. Their attacks, which we have already considered,

<sup>1</sup> Eduard Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism* is by far the best statement.

were chiefly upon the theory of the concentration of capital which supports the theory of the class war.

One's estimate of the value of the work done will vary with one's own politics. That the evolutionary Socialists attained Socialism or came within any measurable distance of achieving it in these fifty years cannot be for a moment maintained. Definite and tangible ameliorations in working-class conditions were achieved, but it is a matter of dispute whether these were due to the Reformist parties or to causes outside their control. Work of great value, however, was indubitably done in the way of propaganda. The ultimate aims of Socialists were brought before everyone's eyes and made the subject of continual discussion and argument. From being a small sectarian creed, Socialism became a world force.

In one country alone, however, parliamentary methods were impossible. This was Russia, where the Tsar's Government repressed as criminal the most timid Liberalism. From this country arose Bolshevism proper—Bolshevism in the sense of the doctrine of the majority fraction of the Russian Social Democratic Party.

The Bolsheviks first appeared in 1903, as the result of a split within the Social Democrats on a minor point of tactics. Nobody expected the split between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks to last. It is one of the ironies of history that the most indefatigable conciliator was Leon Trotsky. For a long time the division of importance was between the Social Revolutionaries—not Marxists—and the Social Democrats as a whole. Then came the Russian

Revolution of 1905. This was the occasion of the first appearance of the Soviet,<sup>1</sup> and was important in other ways. It is therefore necessary briefly to revive the memory of the events of 1905.

The defeat of the Tsar's forces in the Russo-Japanese War led, as usual, to a collapse upon the "internal front." Throughout the year 1905, in spite of the most violent repressions, pogroms, etc., the Government's power was steadily waning. The turning of the non-Socialist worker to revolution may be dated from the massacre of Petrograd workers on 22nd January. Rapidly the power of the bureaucratic machine was so impaired that the Tsar had to make various promises of reform: none of these, naturally, seriously impaired his power. But they were sufficient to allow of freer discussion and the formation of trade unions. On 17th October accidental causes provoked a general strike, centring upon the railways. A council—Soviet—of Petrograd strikers' deputies was formed. Demands for the granting of a full constitution were formulated. The Tsar attempted to break the strike by violence, through General Trepov. Then the middle-class unions joined in. Doctors downed scalpels, chemists downed prescriptions, lawyers downed brief-bags. Intimidated, the Tsar's Government issued the famous October manifesto, conceding the major portion of the strikers' demands. In particular a free Duma (Parliament) was promised, to be elected on a reasonably liberal franchise.

The Tsar's Government, as soon as it had recovered from the shock, attempted to repair its defeat by

<sup>1</sup> Unless Louis Blanc's Luxembourg Assembly in 1848 be counted as such.

stamping out the revolutionary movement by methods which can only be described as mass intimidation and massacre.<sup>1</sup> Perceiving this, the Soviet on 14th November called a second general strike. During this strike the Soviet began to lose its local character and admitted the delegates of peasants from Kharkov. This did not mean that it was attempting to usurp the functions of the coming Assembly, for all these strikes were definitely with the aim of obtaining such an Assembly with full powers.

In any case the strike failed, because the Government stood aside and said, in effect, to the Russian people: "If you like to disarrange the whole economic structure of society, do so. It is your affair, and we are not even interested." Isolated outbreaks in the army, which might have overthrown the Government, remained isolated. Reaction had full swing, and eventually the Government arrested the Soviet, with its chairman, Leon Trotsky. In haste the Socialist Parties—who, it is curious to note, never controlled the Soviet, which had a majority of non-party workers—called another general strike (20th December) which was but feebly carried out. In Moscow it developed into an armed revolt which failed. With this failure ended the revolution, since when the Duma met it had no force to back it and was powerless.

The split between the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks was seriously widened immediately after the enforced unity of the last months of 1905. The Mensheviks fought seats for the Duma; the Bolsheviks boycotted it. The Mensheviks showed many signs

<sup>1</sup> See particularly H. W. Nevinson, *The Dawn in Russia*.



of their willingness to co-operate with the bourgeois parties ; the Bolsheviks hardened in their policy of isolation. The altercation between the two sections grew in bitterness in the period before the war.

During this period American Socialism was isolated from Europe, and its divisions only roughly correspond to the European divisions. There were two parties, the American Socialist Party and the Socialist Labour Party. Both of these were nominally Marxist, but the largest, the American Socialist Party, was under the control of its Right Wing, which was in practice opportunist, and had no qualms about Parliamentary methods. It had succeeded in gaining one seat in Congress, for Mr Victor Berger. However, "the heart of the party was sound." When the war came the extreme Right (J. Spargo, C. E. Russell, etc.) found themselves in a hopeless minority and left the party. Later, on the news of the Soviet Revolution, Eugene V. Debs, the veteran leader of the party, declared himself, from prison, as "Bolshevik from head to foot." The majority of the party seems to have followed him, but the Right was sufficiently strong to make the issue doubtful. Further dissensions led to the formation of a Communist Party and a Communist Labour Party.

In any case the "real, old, genuine" American Bolsheviks are the members of the Socialist Labour Party. This party was always "impossibilist" and rigidly Marxist. It owes its doctrine and inspiration to the late Mr Daniel de Leon. De Leon was a propagandist and orator above all things, and has left very few literary remains by which we can judge his views. Much the best exposition of these is to



be found in his lecture on the Gracchi,<sup>1</sup> where he describes in vigorous language the Marxian theory of history and for a moment, though not directly and in set terms, questions the theory of an inevitable proletarian victory. He then sets forth ten "Canons of the Proletarian Revolution." Among them are :

"2. The proletarian revolution is relentlessly logical. [By this, he explains, is meant that concessions to the ruling class are inadmissible.]

"4. The proletarian revolution brings along its own code. [In other words, bourgeois morality and legality must be ignored. This was, of course, stated long before the rise of Syndicalism.]

"9. The proletarian revolution deals not in double sense. [By this he means that always and everywhere the full aims, the maximum programme, of Socialism, must be demanded.] "

Lenin, in a recent manifesto, recognised De Leon's work. But this was hardly necessary. The S.L.P. could truthfully say that it was the direct anticipator of Bolshevik methods. The Bolsheviks in Russia have acted just as the S.L.P. would act here. Hence in Great Britain at least the S.L.P. has leapt to the front of the revolutionary organisations. It supplies the other parties with literature, defeats their debaters and seizes their members before the parties have even begun to make up their minds. Its influence extends far beyond its ranks.<sup>2</sup>

In industry, at one time (1905 Conference), it advocated the destruction of the existing trade

<sup>1</sup> *Two Pages from Roman History*, second half. S.L.P. edition, pp. 31, 38.

<sup>2</sup> Or did, till in 1920 it expelled all its active members.

unions in favour of the One Big Union, of the type of the I.W.W. In England, at any rate, this policy has been abandoned. We shall, however, consider the Bolshevik industrial policy in detail later.

In Europe, as well as in America, the war had a disintegrating effect upon the national parties which formed the Second International. Certain Marxists went over to the enemy (in the Bolshevik sense). The majority of nearly all Socialist parties took the view that the defence of the Fatherland was their primary duty; that the class war, the defence of the international proletariat, etc., were overridden. No doubt the majority of this majority was provided by the professed Reformists, who had already rejected Marxism, but oddly enough the loudest and most unequivocal champions of Nationalism came from the Marxist ranks. Paul Lensch in Germany, John Spargo in America, H. M. Hyndman in England, George Plekhanov in Russia, were all Marxists. The more honest and intelligent of these, such as Hyndman and Plekhanov, had assumed an Imperialist attitude before the war. Whatever is the reason of this curious aberrant Marxism—whether or no it be the inevitable tendency of Marxists, as observed by unfriendly critics, to proceed to unreasonable extremes—it remains a fact that the most vehement “social patriots,” as the new Communist manifesto calls them, were professing Marxists. But with their assumption of patriotism they pass out of the ranks of the revolutionaries, and indeed out of the purview of history. For they have gained no followers and their movement will be sterile, since Marxism is no doctrine for the upholders of the present national states.

The triumphant procession of Revisionists and Marxists into the patriotic camp in all countries killed the Second International. The Bureau ceased to function. Those sections which still held out had to form their own medium of communication, which they did at first without any intention of supplanting the Second International. Meetings were held at Zimmerwald and Kienthal in 1915-1916, and measures and a programme to stop the war were discussed.<sup>1</sup> So far had the old Socialist theories been forgotten that the revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and so on were practically ignored. Two sections took part—the pacifists, who wished only to stop the war, and the revolutionaries, who were only gradually formulating, or recollecting, their programme. The pacifist element dominated; indeed it would have been difficult for the uninstructed observer to observe the difference between the sections and separate the pacifists from the revolutionaries, the I.L.P. from the Bolsheviki.

With the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917, and still more with the end of the war, this unstable alliance had to come to an end. The way was also clear for a revival of the Second International, although it was clear that it would never have the vigour and possibilities it once had. An alliance between “social patriots”—Noske, Albert Thomas, Arthur Henderson—can only last so long as peace between the nations lasts. Therefore in March, 1919, the revolutionary section formed its International, the lineal successor of Zimmerwald and Kienthal. On the whole, the pacifist section, which had ceased

<sup>1</sup> I have given more details in my booklet on *The International during the War*, pp. 18-39.

to be of importance, stood aloof, although some pacifists had been made revolutionary by the experiences of the Russian Revolution. In any case affiliations were only accepted from thoroughly revolutionary bodies. All non-Soviet governments not unnaturally prevented delegates being sent to the inaugurating congress. Nevertheless many sections are affiliated in the various countries, and in many separate Communist Parties have been formed.

The remnant of the Second International, commonly called the Berne International, has a published programme which clearly marks the parties concerned as "progressive" parties within the national boundaries. Support of Mr Wilson's League of Nations is the main feature of the programme. The Third, or Moscow, or Communist, International has published its manifesto, particular points of which demand separate consideration.

## VII

### EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

THE new Communist manifesto was issued by the first Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow from 2nd March to 6th March 1919. It is signed: C. Rakovsky (Balkans); N. Lenin, G. Zinoviev, Leon Trotsky (Russia); Fritz Platten (Switzerland). It is the only authoritative exposition of the aims of Bolshevism as an international movement. Where this document contradicts the authority of other seemingly important documents—speeches by Trotsky, Soviet resolutions and so forth—its statements must be accepted in all cases. The full text <sup>1</sup> must be read in its continuity to be understood; however, there are certain points of detail with which it deals which demand separate consideration.

It is addressed to "The Proletariat of All Countries." It begins by emphasising its direct dependence upon the old Communist manifesto of 1847:

"We, Communists, representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the different countries of Europe, America and Asia, assembled in Soviet Moscow, feel and consider ourselves followers and fulfillers of the programme proclaimed seventy-two years ago."

<sup>1</sup> Printed in the Appendix, p. 175.



Of course it is not entirely true that they are "fulfillers of the programme" of 1847. The programme in the old Communist manifesto is in no way applicable to modern conditions. In fact the Communist International is inspired rather by *Das Kapital* than the Communist manifesto. A little further on it reiterates the Marxist position in its purity, and also adds comment upon the deterioration of paper money :

"The contradictions of the capitalist system were converted by the war into torments of hunger and cold, epidemics and moral savagery, for all mankind. Thereby the academic quarrel in Socialism over the theory of increasing misery, and also of the undermining of Capitalism through Socialism, is now finally determined. Statisticians and teachers of the theory of reconciliation of these contradictions have endeavoured for decades to gather together from all countries of the earth real and apparent facts to prove the increasing well-being of the working class. . . .

"Finance-capital, which flung mankind into the abyss of war, has itself suffered catastrophic changes during the course of the war. The dependence of paper money upon the material basis of production has been completely destroyed. More and more losing its significance as the medium and regulator of capitalist commodity circulation, paper money becomes merely a means of exploitation, robbery, of military-economic oppression. The complete deterioration of paper money now reflects the general deadly crisis of capitalist commodity exchange."

A little while later, after having argued that capital has, owing to the war, lost all its tendencies which made for peace, and has become firmly connected with militarism, the manifesto proceeds to denounce those who would rebuild capitalism upon a firmer basis. At the same time, with orthodox optimism, it declares this impossible :

“The opportunists who before the war exhorted the workers, on the pretext of a gradual transition into Socialism, to be temperate ; who, during the war, asked for submission in the name of ‘civil peace’ and defence of the Fatherland, now again demand of the workers self-abnegation to overcome the terrible consequences of the war. If this preaching were listened to by the workers Capitalism would build out of the bones of several generations a new and still more formidable structure, leading to a new and inevitable world war. Fortunately for humanity, this is no longer possible.”

State and Capital, says the manifesto, have practically amalgamated. The rule of trusts, etc., being over, the alternative lies between the rule of the Allied bourgeoisie and the rule of the international proletariat. This is so described :

“Only the Proletarian Dictatorship, which recognises neither inherited privileges nor rights of property, but which arises from the needs of the hungering masses, can shorten the period of the present crisis ; and for this purpose it will mobilise all materials and forces, introduce a universal duty to work, establish the regime of industrial discipline,

and will in this way heal in the course of a few years the open wounds caused by the war and also raise humanity to now undreamt-of heights."

The second and third sections of the Communist manifesto contain an appeal and promise to classes commonly forgotten by Socialists—to the natives of colonies. The national Socialist parties have, in fact, treated the black, brown and yellow races as inferior, regarded them as backward and as being educated and civilised by the whites, and as in time destined to arrive at the same halcyon state of capitalism as the whites themselves. The appeal of the Soviets to the workers and peasants of Annam, Bengal, Madagascar and Algeria is a new and, to many, rather disquieting phenomenon. Socialist parties had been prepared to commiserate with exploited nations, but to treat them as revolutionary material is, on the whole, a new move.

The fourth part of the manifesto approaches the question of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat directly :

"The whole bourgeois world accuses the Communists of destroying liberty and political democracy. That is not true. Having come into power, the proletariat only asserts the absolute impossibility of using the methods of bourgeois democracy, and creates the conditions and forms of a higher working-class democracy. The whole course of capitalist development undermined political democracy, not only by dividing the nation into two irreconcilable classes, but also by condemning the numerous petty bourgeois and semi-proletarian elements, as well as

the slum proletariat, to permanent economic stagnation and political impotence."

In this we have stated in a very compressed form considerations which have been weighed previously in this book. The phrase "working-class democracy" is open to a rather pedantic criticism; the Scotch neologism "ergatocracy" is obviously preferable in this sense. The further statements of the manifesto explain themselves. The argument does not require elucidation and must be left by itself to carry conviction or provoke contempt. Its essence lies perhaps in two striking phrases:

"To demand of the proletariat in its final life and death struggle with Capitalism that it should obey lamb-like the precepts of bourgeois democracy would be the same as to ask a man who is defending his life against robbers to follow the artificial rules of a French duel that have been set by his enemy but not followed by him. . . .

"There would be no civil war if the exploiters who have carried mankind to the very brink of ruin had not prevented every forward step of the labouring masses, if they had not instigated plots and murders and called to their aid armed help from outside to maintain or restore their predatory privileges. Civil war is forced upon the labouring classes by their arch-enemies."

We may observe, in the brief historical analysis which follows, one interesting point. One enemy of the Bolshevik is the Centre—the Ramsay MacDonalds, who stand between the Right and the



Left and attempt to act as a connecting link. The cause of the peculiar and very strong dislike of the Bolsheviks for these politicians is obvious. To them the question is one of war, on which you take one side or the other. The man who is on neither and tries to be on both is more dangerous than an actual enemy. It is for this reason that such parties as the I.L.P. or the American Socialist Party find themselves so hardly treated by the Bolsheviks.

The programme which follows is of less importance than the preamble. The first important statement that we reach is this paragraph :

“World Capitalism is preparing itself for the final battle. Under cover of the ‘League of Nations’ and a deluge of pacifist phrase-mongering, a desperate effort is being made to pull together the tumbling capitalist system and to direct its forces against the constantly growing proletarian revolt. This monstrous new conspiracy of the capitalist class must be met by the proletariat by seizure of the political power of the State, turning this power against its class enemies, and using it as a lever to set in motion the economic revolution. The final victory of the proletariat of the world means the beginning of the real history of free mankind.”

This is important in many ways. The attitude to the League of Nations is likely to surprise many very well-meaning people. The talk about “people of good will *getting together*,” “a little step in advance,” “seeing what can be made of an imperfect instrument,” and all such phrases, dear to well-off Liberalism, which assume Progress as a continual pheno-



menon, are peculiarly the preserve of the advocates of the League. They are also peculiarly offensive to the Bolsheviks, since they glibly beg quantities of questions, including all the questions which a Socialist thinks fundamental. Their very simplicity and the innocence of their users make them the more dangerous. If this attitude, in regard to the League of Nations, seems unreasonable, we must at least remember that the first act of the constituent bodies of the League was quite wantonly and unreasonably to attack two peaceable Soviet nations.

The middle sentence has a bearing upon certain theories of revolution, such as the general strike theory, which we can consider later. For the moment the order should be noticed: a political revolution leading to an economic one is anticipated.

The manifesto, however, quickly returns to the question of Proletarian Dictatorship, which is, after all, the essential point of Bolshevism. It states:

“The proletarian State, like every State, is an organ of suppression, but it arrays itself against the opposition of the despoilers of labour, who are using every means in a desperate effort to stifle the revolution in blood, and to make impossible further opposition. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which gives it a favoured position in the community, is only a provisional institution. As the opposition of the bourgeoisie is broken, as it is expropriated and gradually absorbed into the working groups, the proletarian dictatorship disappears, until finally the State dies and there are no more class distinctions.

“Democracy so-called—that is, bourgeois democ-

racy—is nothing more nor less than veiled dictatorship by the bourgeoisie. The much-vaunted ‘popular will’ exists as little as a unified people. In reality there are classes with antagonistic and irreconcilable purposes. However, since the bourgeoisie is only a small minority, it needs this fiction of the ‘popular will’ as a flourish of fine-sounding words to reinforce its rule over the working classes and to impose its own class will upon the people. The proletariat, on the contrary, as the overwhelming majority of the people, openly exercises its class power by means of its mass organisation and through its Soviets, in order to wipe out the privileges of the bourgeoisie and to secure the transition, or rather the transformation, into a classless Communist commonwealth.

“The main emphasis of bourgeois democracy is on a formal declaration of rights and liberties which are actually unattainable by the proletariat, through want of the material means for their enjoyment ; while the bourgeoisie uses its material advantages, through its Press and other organisations, to deceive and betray the people. On the other hand, the Soviet type of government makes it possible for the proletariat to realise its rights and liberties. The Soviet power gives to the people palaces, houses, printing offices, paper supply, etc., for their Press, their societies and meetings. And in this way alone is actual proletarian democracy made possible.”

Much of the matter in this programme we have already considered. We find, however, that the manifesto contemplates the defeat of the proletariat as possible—not, indeed, as a defeat, but as a victory

so long postponed that civilisation falls before it has come. The difference seems very small.

“Communism is now being born out of the ruins of capitalism—there is no other salvation for humanity. The opportunists who are making Utopian demands for the reconstruction of the economic system of capitalism, so as to postpone socialisation, only delay the process of disintegration and increase the danger of total demolition. The Communist revolution, on the other hand, is the best and the only means by which the most important social power of production—the proletariat—can be saved, and with it society itself.”

Later, the manifesto considers the fate of the semi-proletarians. We find that the Bolsheviks recognise the necessity of leaving the small working owner to himself. It is admitted that these sections must not be expropriated. The force of example is to be relied upon :

“As far as the smallest enterprises are concerned, the proletariat must gradually unite them, according to the degree of their importance. It must be particularly emphasised that small properties will in no way be expropriated and that property owners who are not exploiters of labour will not be forcibly dispossessed. This element will gradually be drawn into the Socialist organisation through the force of example, through practical demonstration of the superiority of the new order of things and the regulation by which the small farmers and the petty bourgeoisie of the cities will be freed from economic

bondage to usurious capital and landlordism, and from tax burdens (especially by annulment of the national debts), etc.”

Further on we have another section of the semi-proletarian dealt with. The technical experts, etc., are to be treated with the greatest circumspectness. This is probably the only possible method. The dictatorship of the industrial proletariat—the proletariat pure as we have defined it—is, of course, quite as defensible (from the Bolshevik point of view) as the dictatorship of the proletariat in the most enlarged sense. But in fact the dictatorship is very difficult, if not impossible, unless the doubtful elements are conciliated. The managerial and technical staffs will disorganise industry, while the peasant and small owners will provide the necessary recruits for the White army. Thus the dictatorship of the proletariat may have in fact to be a dictatorship of the majority of the community. Otherwise it will fail. The manifesto states :

“All qualified technical experts and specialists are to be made use of, provided that their political resistance is broken and they are still capable of adapting themselves, not to the service of capital, but to the new system of production. Far from oppressing them, the proletariat will make it possible for the first time for them to develop intensive creative work. The Proletarian Dictatorship, with their co-operation, will reverse the separation of physical and mental work which capitalism has developed and thus will Science and Labour be unified.”

There is very little more worthy of remark in the manifesto which has not already received comment. The statement of the position taken up towards other parties is of interest, particularly as the element of Syndicalism in Bolshevism is quite small :

“The indispensable condition for successful struggle is separation not only from the direct servants of capitalism and enemies of the Communist revolution, among whom are the Social Democrat of the Right, but also from the Centre Parties, who desert the proletariat at the critical moment in order to come to terms with its open antagonists. On the other hand, there are essential elements of the proletariat, heretofore not within the Socialist Party, who stand now completely and absolutely on the platform of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the form of Soviet rule: for example, the corresponding elements among the Syndicalists.”



## VIII

### SYNDICALISM, BLANQUISM AND BOLSHEVISM

EVEN ignorant denunciations have some point. The man who speaks of Bolshevism as "just Syndicalism run mad" may merely be attempting to say that Syndicalism was stupid violence, and Bolshevism only more stupidity and more violence. Yet, unless his denunciation has some connection with the facts, it is ridiculous, and will not hurt or annoy anyone. And, in fact, there is a real link between Syndicalism and Bolshevism.

This link is not in matters of theory. The Bolsheviks are rigid Marxists. Syndicalism has not the least connection with Marxism. The Syndicalist revolution was to be based on a general strike. No Bolshevik, indeed no revolutionary, now relies upon the general strike to accomplish the revolution. The lesson of the first Russian Revolution has been learnt. The general strike hits the workers first. The Government and upper classes need only stand aside and the workers will starve themselves into submission. When we come to debate the question whether the general strike was ever a real objective, or only an "energising myth," and such philosophical foolery, we feel ourselves in another world. The Bolshevik does at least preach what he believes, or anyhow what he believes he believes. This part of Syndicalism has no relation to the Bolshevik movement.

The ultimate ambitions of the Syndicalists also do not correspond to the Bolshevik aims. Of course

these were at any time very difficult to discover. The Syndicalists always professed contempt for any Utopian systems and refused to sketch in any way the future state. This added to the power of their propaganda and was, in addition, a useful method of evading awkward questions. But so far they deigned to have a programme, and to communicate it to the outside world it would seem that they believed that the revolutionary industrial unions would transform themselves into independent industrial republics. The State was to disappear. By the State they meant, not only as Marx did, the coercive power of the governing class, but the nation, the community as a whole, and all political machinery.

Bolshevik action, not Bolshevik theory, has made these proposals and assumptions absurd. They have an aged and earthy smell, as though they had been exhumed. The Russian and other revolutions show clearly that at the point of revolution independent industrial republics are inconceivable. The one thing that is so urgently necessary as not to permit of question is a strong central power. So far from the central power being weakened, it must be made stronger than ever and will have on occasion to take over power that obviously belongs to local and industrial organisations. Nor can the building up of trade unions alone bring the revolution. These trade unions can only strike, and, however perfect the strike is, it cannot have any positive effect. The rich can always afford to wait longer than the poor, and trade union action cannot expel a government. Syndicalism is *vieux jeu*, not because Syndicalists lack revolutionary spirit, but because they are not practical in their methods.

However, certain elements of Syndicalism have undoubtedly been absorbed by the Bolshevik movement. It was the Syndicalists who first revived the conception of the class war which is the faith of the Bolsheviks. They saw capitalism as a bitter and unending class war, not as an amicable election fight. They reasoned that, as the governing class had made its own culture and its own laws, so the uprising proletariat must have its culture, independent of and differing from the bourgeois culture, and was responsible not to bourgeois law but only to its own conscience. No communion of interest was possible between exploiter and exploited. These theories were, of course, not new, but came to the well-fed pre-war society as a shock as great as if they had been new. But they were themselves theories of pre-war days. The Syndicalist thought of the class war solely as an industrial war, fought out in the factory and workshop by industrial means. This was because in pre-war days the class war was only obvious on the industrial side of society. That it might also become operative on the political side did not apparently occur to him.

For this reason he rejected parliamentary action and political action of any kind. But in his defence of this he brought forward many of the arguments which are the chief weapons of the Bolshevik. Syndicalists were the first to perceive that parliamentary action of necessity obscures the class war and breaks up a revolutionary party. Lagardelle,<sup>1</sup> in 1906, wrote :

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from J. R. MacDonald's *Syndicalism*, p. 10. Syndicalism caused a considerable flutter in the sleepy Socialist ranks of those days. Mr MacDonald therefore descended from

A parliamentary party "continues to speak of the class war, but practises co-operation with other classes. . . . The bourgeois, bourgeois interests, bourgeois ambitions and vanities penetrate even the parties which call themselves working class."

"The class struggle is the basis of Syndicalism," said Challaye.

This is "pure Bolshevism." But Syndicalism is now a dead movement. Its aim was, after all, only revolution. The Marxist Bolsheviks have made their revolution. The Syndicalists never came near theirs. Therefore the fighting spirit, which was the essence and strength of Syndicalism, has passed into the Bolshevik camp. The Syndicalist armoury has been abandoned as obsolete. Certain of its weapons have been looted by the industrial pacifists, whom we shall consider later. But all the valuable effects of the late movement have fallen into the possession of the Bolsheviks.

These are two in number. The first and less important is the theory of bourgeois and proletarian morality. Real alarm was excited before the war from the defence of sabotage of all kinds by a general statement that common morality did not apply to the rising working-class movement. Its moral standards were its own. From the bourgeois point of view, that is, it announced its intention of doing exactly what it chose, however immoral. A similar theory, we have seen, was enunciated by De Leon.

his throne and reassured his flock by this book which proved (1) that the syndicalists were negligible numerically; (2) that their theories were logically worthless, and on occasion deliberately dishonest; (3) that they were also uncivilisedly violent. However, these are dead controversies.



And to-day, naturally, this or some such theory is part of Bolshevism, as it is a logical deduction from the class war and may be inferred from some phrases of the Communist Manifesto. More important is the foreshadowing of the proletarian dictatorship in Syndicalism. Syndicalist writers always insisted upon the right of the minority to guide and rule. But they have not done this on Marxist grounds, upon a clear class basis. They have not argued in terms of classes, or stated that it is the right and duty of the majority of the proletariat, although possibly and probably a minority of the community, to undertake the emancipation of its own class. They have rather argued in terms of "the active minority" and "the apathetic majority." From such terms arise conceptions without an economic justification, such as "the divine right of minorities," which are proper to aristocratic rather than Socialist circles, and lead to the most astonishing deductions and elaborations, which are more anarchist than socialist in character.

It has also been said that Bolshevism is Blanquism. To be called a Blanquist gives to an English-speaking Socialist the same abrupt and disconcerting shock as a pious lay Christian would receive when called a Manichee or a Pelagian. It has the same vague terror—it suggests an ancient error at once fatal and absurd—long ago exploded, antique and deadly. This terror is increased by the fact that no one knows what it is. The victim feels that in some dark and recondite way he has hacked at the roots of civilisation. Just as many pious people are not sure that a Manichee is not a kind of ape, so many Socialists will think a Blanquist is a follower of Louis Blane,



and try hastily to revive the impressions of the distant time when they read the *Organisation du Travail*.

Blanquism has nothing to do with Blanc. It is the doctrine of the followers of Louis Auguste Blanqui, professional revolutionary, of the last century. Up till the fall of the Commune Blanquism was the paramount force in Socialism. With Blanqui's death it vanished, and although French Socialists still sometimes speak affectionately of *le vieux*, he has left not even a memory for other Socialists.

The connection of Blanquism with Bolshevism is a historical error. Blanquism was Blanqui. Blanqui was not the creator of a theory, but the leader of a revolution. He was a conspirator, an insurrectionist. He spent his life devising means of injuring the bourgeois. He hated the bourgeois; but he had few theories about him. He was a Communist, *bien entendu*, but his policy, as a policy, consisted in the negation of theory. The first and last commandment of Blanqui to his followers was: No Utopias! To theorise over the form the Socialist state should take was, in the first place, idiotic, because it did not depend on you; in the second, unpleasant, because the theories produced were uniformly revolting and suggested a prison regime; and, in the third, counter-revolutionary, because it introduced unending dissensions. The aim and object of Socialism was only this: the victory of the proletariat. This was alone worthy of any efforts.

We have already quoted his formulation of the theory of proletarian dictatorship. That is his only lasting contribution to Socialist theory. Blanqui

was a great tactician, nothing more. His party consisted of numberless personal adherents who knew that he would lead them right. When Blanquism came to power with the Paris Commune, Blanqui was in prison. Then "Blanquism" showed its lack of any policy. The Commune pulled down the Vendôme Column, and that was about as much as Blanquism without Blanqui could produce as a social policy.

Blanqui had a very clear policy, however, as regards the moment of revolution. This has a certain affinity with Bolshevism in that it is not democratic. His life was spent in organising a secret society of the élite of the revolution. Its members were not to be chosen merely for their opinions, but for their courage, discretion and experience. Their aim was not primarily propaganda but violence, not discussion but revolution. This society, together with supporters outside its ranks, would clearly form not merely a minority of the whole community, but a minority of the proletariat itself. Nevertheless this body was to be prepared to take control. It would take advantage of some temporary explosion of popular anger to upset the Government and take its place. Once in this position, the Blanquists would not for months, for years, indeed, make any appeal to the vote. "The appeal to universal suffrage in 1848," wrote Blanqui just before the rise of the Commune, "was deliberate treason—*trahison réfléchi*." Ever since the fall of Robespierre, in 1794, the French people had been permitted to hear only the voice of the bourgeoisie. It is absurd, said Blanqui, to neglect this and to imagine that a people so treated is free and not bull-dozed. For a con-

siderable time the Communists must retain power, while the bourgeoisie is muzzled and the workers permitted to hear the other side, the Communist case, which has been so long suppressed. "Ignorance is incompatible with Communism," but instruction is impossible under the present regime.

The revolutionary Marxist position is opposed to this. A majority of the proletariat is necessary for the dictatorship of the proletariat; a chance group of men who may or may not be working class is no substitute. The Bolsheviks waited until they had a Soviet majority in November. They did not initiate the July revolt (1917), but only joined it when it seemed likely to become a real popular revolt. Marx and Engels, moreover, did not contemplate a secret society, carefully organised, which would one day strike suddenly from the darkness, send a majesty spinning from his throne and take his place. They insisted, where possible, upon open propaganda and the use of the various liberties provided by the bourgeois state. It is to be observed, however, that the procedure of the German Communists (Spartacists) in 1919 was Blanquist rather than Bolshevik. The formation of a group of fighters, the abstention from politics, the insurrection when it was clear that only a minority of the German proletariat was revolutionary—all this is Blanquist, not Bolshevik. The recent split inside the Spartacist movement is, so far as can be gathered, in reality a split between the Blanquists and the Bolsheviks.

Blanqui has been dead a long time. However, in searching for evil words to throw at the Bolsheviks, men have gone even further back. And since we are raising revolutionary ghosts, we might as well con-

sider their last attack—"Hebertists! The Bolsheviks are Hebertists!" This, however, is merely silly. There is not, and never was, such a thing as Hebertism. Jacques René Hebert, Deputy Procureur of the Commune of Paris in the year of Our Lord 1793 and III. of Liberty, may in his youth have been touched by the flame of the Revolution. But when he came into notice he was but a sordid seeker for power, picking up the passing ideas of the *sans culottes* and making them more savage and violent, crying always for blood to sell his journal. His gospel was only the gospel of getting on, of self-aggrandisement, and that by the worst means—excitation to murder. Anybody, particularly a journalist or politician, who inflames the anger of a mob against a minority is a Hebertist. Nearly all existing governments are Hebertist. But, all the same, Hebertism is not a theory.

## IX

KARL KAUTSKY

THERE are two theories which are ultimate and irreconcilable. There is that theory which looks upon human history as a record of progress, interrupted, no doubt, and incomplete as yet, but yet steady, permanent progress.

They spoke of Progress spiring round,  
Of Light, and Mrs Humphry Ward,

says Mr G. K. Chesterton. This theory is proper to evolutionary Socialists and is held by Hegelians such as Mr J. Ramsay MacDonald. Opposed to it is the theory—Marxism or Bolshevism—which regards history as, roughly speaking, the record of varying class dominations and enslavements. “Progress” has no meaning. Only with the victory of the lowest class—the proletariat—and its absorption of all other classes can progress begin. The history of civilisation then, and then alone, commences.

A reconciliation of these doctrines, or a *via media*, is not possible. It is for that reason that Karl Kautsky’s attempt to be revolutionary—Socialist, but not Bolshevik—is a failure. His attitude and his book<sup>1</sup> are of the greatest importance. In the first place, he is one of the most eminent living Marxists. He is not, as Plekhanov was, a Marxist

<sup>1</sup> *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, Eng. tr., London, 1920, 2s. 6d.



who has lost his revolutionary faith and become violently Imperialist. He is a member of the German Independent Social Democratic Party, by no means an enviable position, or one natural to a supporter of the bourgeoisie. He is the most eminent and indeed the only theorist of the Centre parties, who would like to be revolutionary, but are not Bolshevik. Largely, however, they just cannot make up their minds. Kautsky's book is an attempt to defend and justify this Centre attitude, which he takes to be pure Marxism as opposed to Bolshevik distortion. If his attempt be held successful, and if a *via media* exists, then Bolshevism collapses both in theory and practice. The extremes of Right and Left are both neurotic, results of the war, and will disappear as nerve-racked men are healed, and Socialism will flow into the channel Kautsky has dug.

Unfortunately his book is in part not merely confused, but even occasionally disingenuous. For example, he says, on his very first page, that the Commune was "superior to the Soviet Republic" because "all shades of the Socialist movement took part in it, none drew back." Apart from the fact that at that time the Left republicans were in the same position relative to the working class as the evolutionary Socialists are now,<sup>1</sup> the statement is not true. The only recognised French Socialist leader, Louis Blanc, did most decidedly "draw back." Only the secret and sinister International and the outcast Blanquists joined in the Commune. Or again, he suggests (p. 60) that the Russian

<sup>1</sup> Their programme was: A Republic at once with gradual social reform, or socialism, within it.

Moderates were prepared to continue the war in 1917 ("keep their arms in readiness"—whatever that means) unless a general peace could be arranged. This is quite untrue, as the attitude of the Constituent Assembly showed.

His main object is to prove himself Marxist and the Bolsheviks non-Marxist. A perfectly just and reasonable criticism can be put forward, from the Bolshevik point of view, that the ideas which he expresses are bourgeois—non-Socialist at any rate—but are carefully veiled in orthodox Marxian phraseology. No one can glance at Kautsky's book without perceiving the proper heavy Marxist phrases, used to the point of physical exhaustion. But just as you cannot make an atheist writer a Christian by the insertion of Biblical phrases, so even the most execrable style of writing is not a certain guarantee of orthodox Marxism. Kautsky starts off (chap. ii.) by begging the whole question. He assumes that the choice lies between "democracy" generally and "dictatorship" generally. In so doing he makes the judgment go by default. Few people will bother to defend dictatorship in principle as against democracy. Kautsky, as Lenin<sup>1</sup> points out, here sins most grossly against his own Marxist canons. The question of dictatorship is not to be considered in the abstract, nor is it so raised, but in relation to the class war. It is the dictatorship of the uprising class—the workers—against the capitalists for the purpose of securing their emancipation from capitalism. It is not dictatorship gener-

<sup>1</sup>Theses submitted to the First Congress of the Communist International. Issued in England by the W.S.F. Reprinted on p. 201.

ally, but dictatorship of a certain specified class against another specified class, and for a specific purpose. The question to be considered, on Marxist lines, is not, "Is Dictatorship better than Democracy?"—a subject only fit to occupy the attention of a school debating society—but "Is the retention of the forms of bourgeois democracy advisable or not advisable for the attainment of the emancipation of the workers?"

Kautsky's bourgeois conception vitiates the whole of his arguments. He, moreover, supports it disingenuously. He states that true democracy can exist apart from Socialism, "for example, in small peasant communities" (p. 7). Quite possibly. But we are not confronted with "small peasant communities." Peasant communities which come into the orbit of capitalism meet the same fate as delicate machinery struck with a crowbar. We have to deal with capitalism in which true democracy cannot, as Kautsky states, "precede Socialism." Bourgeois democracy is clearly stated by Marx to be nothing but bourgeois class rule. Kautsky is, of course, aware of this, but by a sleight of hand talks as though bourgeois democracy were "democracy" in the popular sense, and therefore could be contrasted as being "the rule of the people," *δημοκρατία*, with dictatorship, an anti-popular government. This is done by omitting to emphasise the fact that the dictatorship is dictatorship *of the workers*, and that the democracy is democracy of the bourgeoisie.

So far from Marx allowing that bourgeois democracy is in any way popular rule, he states that the more apparently pure the democratic forms of government are, the more naked is the class rule

of the bourgeoisie. Listen to this quotation from *The 18th Brumaire*<sup>1</sup> :

“Instinct taught them [the reactionaries] that while indeed the republic completes their authority, it at the same time undermined their social foundation, in that, without intermediary, without the mark of the crown, without being able to turn aside the national interest by means of subordinate struggles amongst its own conflicting elements and with the crown, the republic is compelled to stand up sharp against the subjugated classes and wrestle with them. It was a sense of weakness that caused them to recoil before the unqualified demands of their own class rule and to retreat to the less complete, less developed, and for that very reason less dangerous forms of the same”—*i.e.* to abandon the Republican “pure democracy” for the more veiled class rule of a Monarchy.

So we perceive that in urging Socialists to prefer “democracy to dictatorship,” Kautsky, as an orthodox Marxist, is urging them to prefer the naked class rule of the bourgeoisie to the domination of the proletariat.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Chicago ed., p. 50. Compare also *The [Gotha] Socialist Programme*, issued in England by the S.L.P.

<sup>2</sup> This is not, I hope, merely pedantic discussion about “what Marx said.” “What Marx said” is certainly a matter of importance, but it does not affect immediately our judgment of Bolshevism, nor provide an infallible criterion of truth, yet is of importance here, when we are considering whether Kautsky is restating revolutionary Socialist theory adequately, or merely using Marxist phrases to cover ordinary Liberal or evolutionary ideas.



Kautsky then proceeds, in his third chapter, to argue in effect that democracy must be retained because it "ripens the proletariat." In other words, democracy, by the education which freedom of speech and meeting gives to the proletariat, prepares the way for Socialism. This is possibly true, possibly not. Kautsky makes several very interesting reflections upon this point. But it is entirely irrelevant. The dictatorship of the proletariat is not advocated for the period of the ripening of the proletariat. The very phrase is meaningless : it is not merely a mixed metaphor, but complete nonsense. While the proletariat is "ripening" for revolution, clearly another class is in control, and it may or may not be good tactics, as against that class, to demand the forms of bourgeois democracy, but a proletarian dictatorship is impossible.

The theory against which his arguments are valid is not Bolshevik but Blanquist. According to Blanqui, the class-conscious proletarians, when they were in a sufficiently strong minority, would seize the government and educate the workers up to Communism. This is dictatorship over the proletariat and ripening in a foreign-house. But even this theory Kautsky treats dishonestly. Instead of quoting Blanqui, he makes the theory ridiculous by quoting only his predecessor Weitling, a fantastic and inconsistent writer, who proposed among other things that the Communist leaders should break open the prisons and place themselves at the head of the inhabitants. Thus Socialism would be the work of a band of drunkards, violators and murderers. It is easy to make such proposals seem absurd.

Kautsky continues in his fourth chapter to dilate



upon the "ripening" qualities of democracy. Most of this, as we have observed, is irrelevant. But he argues, apparently, that Socialism can be achieved gradually by Parliamentary methods (it is Kautsky and not Bernstein who is writing), although he does not enlarge upon the Marxist aspect of this achievement of Socialism through the State. In support of this he produces a startling argument : that bourgeois democracy destroys the rule of the bureaucracy. Under democracy, he says (pp. 26-27), the power of the bureaucracy is continually lessened.

This statement is so amazing that it defies comment. The democratic government of France (and of Great Britain) hardly leads one to suppose that the power of bureaucracy is at its last gasp.

With his next chapter (p. 42) Kautsky recovers himself and restates the problem very fairly. He then has to prove that Marx never contemplated the dictatorship of the proletariat. He has to explain away, therefore, the two sentences in Marx's letter in the *Gotha Programme* (1875)<sup>1</sup> :

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. This requires a political transition stage, which can be nothing else than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat."

This seems definite enough. But in two pages Kautsky proves, to his own satisfaction, that Marx by his last six words really meant "democracy." The feat leaves one gasping : it is better than producing a rabbit from one's hat.

<sup>1</sup> English edition (S.L.P.), p. 13.

This is how it is done. Kautsky first toys with the idea of proving his point by the fact that Marx thought that the revolution might perhaps come peacefully in America and England. That is perfectly true, for it is not *inconceivable* that the dictatorship of the proletariat might be exercised in parliamentary forms. However, the argument did not seem specious enough, so it was abandoned. Then Kautsky argues thus: Marx approved of the Paris Commune, and in 1871 stated that it "revealed the political form under which the freedom of labour could be attained." The Paris Commune was based on universal suffrage, therefore the proletarian dictatorship is democracy.<sup>1</sup>

This is very, very ingenious. But it neglects some extremely important facts. In the first place, the Commune was not a parliamentary organisation. Its endeavour, so far as it was permitted to shape a policy, was to destroy the existing State machine and hand it over to self-governing workers' organisations. It was this idea which induced it to invest its officers with such quaint titles as "Delegate to the ex-Prefecture of Police." Kautsky, on the other hand, is arguing, not that revolutionaries should destroy the State, but that they should make use of all the forms and organisations of bourgeois

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 43-44. At least Kautsky does not make the same error as Spargo in his *Bolshevism*, where he argues that Marx first of all, at the time of the Communist Manifesto, approved of proletarian dictatorship but withdrew his approval after the Commune. The exact reverse is the case, of course. The Communist Manifesto contains no explicit reference to proletarian dictatorship: the Commune caused Marx to reflect that the proletariat could not use existing State forms: four years later he definitely pronounces in favour of proletarian dictatorship. And Spargo is the author of the only Life of Marx in English!

democracy. Whereas, in point of fact, Marx deduced from the Commune "that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes" (Preface to the Communist Manifesto).

In any case the Commune was only nominally based upon universal suffrage. Very many of the upper classes had fled: of those that remained the majority refused to vote: those bourgeois representatives who were elected refused to sit. The upper classes would not take part in the Commune. It was for that reason that it was a proletarian organisation. Otherwise every borough council is a Commune.

But even if Kautsky's facts were correct, his conclusion is absurd. If Marx, by the phrase "the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat" used in the context quoted above, meant "democracy" only, then he was an imbecile or suffering from some form of aphasia which made him unable to express his thoughts. In which case it is hardly worth while discussing what he says.

After this argument Kautsky proceeds to other feats of sophistry which are hardly less amazing. His object is to prove that "dictatorship of the proletariat" is a meaningless phrase (alas, poor Marx!) because "a class can only rule, not govern." This, we gather, is because a class cannot be defined exactly—there are always puzzling individuals—and because it is too large. Therefore proletarian dictatorship must mean dictatorship of a party, and from this Kautsky makes all sorts of destructive deductions. Now if by "govern" Kautsky means actually fill offices—and it is difficult to see what

else he means—a party is also “too large.” And the fact that a class cannot be closely defined means merely that a constitution on Soviet lines will be only approximately accurate: real proletarians may be omitted and false proletarians included. But this does not mean that a class is, for purposes of the allocation of power, non-existent: class rule is a very real thing. On Kautsky’s lines it can also be argued that there is no colour red because it shades imperceptibly into orange, also that a swift runner can never overtake a tortoise, and many other pleasant conceits, in which the Greeks excelled.

After this Kautsky proceeds to a discussion of Russian events and matters of history in which we are not concerned, although we may, in passing, remark that he makes some very questionable statements, as, for example, on p. 70, when he seems to state that the Mensheviks founded the 1905 Soviet, which is about as accurate as stating that the Independent Labour Party founded “the trade unions.” When, on p. 78, he returns for a moment to the real problem and states it clearly, he at once slides off into a discussion of an unsigned article in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. He certainly makes the author of it look silly, but it hardly seems to matter what are the opinions of an anonymous writer in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*.<sup>1</sup> . . . From

<sup>1</sup> In another place Kautsky argues that the Soviets exclude all but Bolsheviks. This I do not believe to be true. To avoid passing too far outside the domain of theory, I will confine myself to two quotations: (1) *Wireless Press*, 6th June 1919 (London papers, 7th June): At the seventh Congress of Soviets for the Government of Viatka, held at Yaransk, the Bolsheviks obtained only thirty-five seats out of a total of ninety-five; (2) *Volksrecht*, 14th May 1919: Report of the Minsk Conference of the Jewish



this discussion of Russian history Kautsky deduces that the Russian Revolution is middle class (chap. viii.). This is slavish adherence to formulæ. Marx himself admitted that Russia might leap the dividing stage of capitalist republicanism and go almost at once from Tsarism to Socialism. To argue that every country must pass through exactly the same economic revolutions is pedantic. In Russia great industry was introduced under Tsarism ; hence we have large employers as the prevailing type and a great and thoroughly industrialised proletariat.<sup>1</sup> There is no room for the huge masses of small employers who form the backbone of a bourgeois, 1848 type of revolution. The Russian middle class is too weak ever to be able to make a revolution. Either a Socialist revolution or nothing. *Aut Lenin, aut nullus.*

Finally (p. 139) Kautsky adjures his "Bolshevik comrades" not to defend the dictatorship as theoretically right, but as forced upon them by circumstances. Here he recommends a course which is most attractive. It is easy to construct a specious case for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly on democratic lines. The Soviets were nearly as democratic in their electorate. They were closer to the masses and were continually being renewed. The Constituent Assembly was elected before the great wave to the Left. The very peasants who had put in members of the Right a few weeks later voted

Bund : Resolution carried vigorously condemning the Bolsheviks, but stating that the Bund would henceforth work through the Soviets and constitute the formal opposition therein. (The Bund is the oldest Russian Socialist organisation of very moderate tendencies.)

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vandervelde, *Three Aspects of the Russian Revolution*, p. 35.



for the Left. The Constituent Assembly was forbidding the electors to change their minds. The lists on which it was elected were so confused as to make a real election impossible. And so forth. But apologists of Bolshevism would do well to avoid these arguments. They are disingenuous. The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly must be defended on principle or not at all. Other arguments will only serve to explain the time and manner of its dissolution, not the fact itself.

A further point is raised by Mr J. R. MacDonald in his book, *Parliament and Revolution*. He there states (chap. vi.) that the Soviet system is necessarily inferior to Parliament, on grounds of structure. It has frequently been observed that the Soviet itself is a good form of organisation, but that the Regional Soviet, which is a Congress of Soviets, and the All-Russia Executive Committee, which is a congress of congresses, are too distant from the electorate. They give too much opportunity for "wangling" by the party in power. This is, of course, true. On the other hand, it is quite clear that Parliament and Congress certainly are not exempt from corruption and "wangling." The Soviet, as I shall attempt to show later, is a living organism and a true reflection of the electorate, because it depends directly on existing groupings in society, and its members are in constant touch with a small electorate. Any body elected to represent a great electorate, running into millions, can only have a general mandate, and in nine out of ten of its actions will be uncontrolled and tyrannical. The safeguard for the vitality and power of the Soviets can only lie in the fact that the regional body is a Congress of Soviets. Otherwise a body

directly elected will encroach upon their power and impair democracy unnecessarily. This is not to say that the Bolshevik method is necessarily right and that it might not be better to have the All-Russia Executive Committee directly elected. But it is clear that we are faced with a problem that has no final solution and confronts every society whose limits exceed those of a Greek city state. If the central authority is directly elected, local autonomy may be killed, as in France to-day ; if the local body is made the unit of organisation, the hierarchy of congresses gives opportunity for corruption and dilution of the popular will.<sup>1</sup>

The rest of Mr MacDonald's book does not require consideration, being merely soporific.

<sup>1</sup> To avoid a confusion to which Mr MacDonald's phrasing might lead one, it should be remembered that the County, Regional, Provincial and All-Russia Soviets are not elected one by another in a huge hierarchy (see later, p. 131). The Constitution is more complex and yet more direct.

## X

### INDUSTRIAL PACIFISM

It seems ridiculous now to reflect that one of the most grievous sins of the Bolsheviks was their alleged pacifism. Anything less pacific than Bolshevism is hard to imagine. Revolutionary Socialists are, in fact, continually being attacked by real pacifists—Quakers, Tolstoyans and such—for “preaching class war.” The accusation, of course, misses its aim. No Socialist preaches class war—that is, attempts by words to produce an antagonism of class interests. Socialists merely call attention to an existing fact, and plan their actions in accordance with that fact. To act otherwise would be folly. It would, in addition, be dishonest.

All the same there is a real and deep scission between the Bolshevik and the pacifist. The true-blue pacifist will have nothing to do with the class war; for him it either does not exist, except perhaps as a certain regrettable snappiness which could easily be remedied, or else, as far as it does exist, should and could be removed by a Change of Heart only. When he triumphantly says that the Bolshevik cannot refute him, he is too swift in his triumph. It is true that his arguments are unassailable, but that is because his premises are incorrect. It is not illogicality with which he is reproached, but complete blindness to facts.

Nevertheless during the war there existed a precarious alliance between revolutionaries and pacifists. This was partly negative and confined merely to opposition to the war. But it had its positive side. There did, in fact, exist a school of pacifist revolutionaries, absurd though the phrase may seem, which dated from pre-war days. This section was recruited from the Syndicalists and Industrial Unionists. It consisted of all those who believed that the revolution could be achieved by purely industrial methods and without recourse to armed force. A General Strike would do it: the workers would just fold their arms and the capitalist system would topple over. A mere refusal to work under unjust and immoral conditions was a thing to which no one could object, and this simple action opened endless vistas of social progress. To organise this general strike previous work was necessary. Industrial trade unions must be built up. On this point there was disagreement. The earliest idea was that of the "One Big Union," and the I.W.W. remains as the creation of this idea. This principle is again coming into favour in America and Australia. In England, however, this idea was practically still-born. "Industrial Unionism" in England does not usually mean the One-Big-Unionism of the I.W.W., but the building up of vast unions, federated among themselves, of course, each of which covers one industry only, but covers that completely, to the exclusion of craft divisions. With this modification came modification in the method of the General Strike. It was perceived that in order to paralyse industry it was not necessary for every worker to come out, but it would be enough if certain essential

industries—coal, electricity, transport—are held up, because all the rest of industry depends upon them. Arnold Roller<sup>1</sup> gleefully remarks that by this means of revolution the proletariat has upon its side the witless and timid mass which is commonly to be found against it, for every spiritless worker who stays at home for fear of being involved in street disturbances is *malgré lui* another striker. Some advocates of the General Strike were, of course, far from pacifist, though they were anti-militarist, which is a quite different thing. The French Syndicalists, notably, were prepared to proceed to extremes of sabotage and actual fighting. MM. Pataud and Pouget, in their *Comment Nous Férons la Révolution*,<sup>2</sup> give an account of the coming of the revolution which is far from peaceful. Such people relied upon the General Strike as a revolutionary weapon, not because they were opposed to violence, but because they believed that this economic weapon struck behind the back of the armed forces of the State and made rebellion superfluous. They also said quite truly that a revolution which was to be economic as well as political must be achieved by a weapon which was economic as well as political.

Out of such various elements was made up the school of purely industrial revolutionaries. The General Strike and the Revolution by Industrial Action are no longer so much in favour as they were, but advocates of them still exist. The Workers' Socialist Federation issued in 1919 a work by Mr Jack Tanner, of *Solidarity*, which reproduced Arnold

<sup>1</sup> *The Social General Strike*, Eng. tr., Chicago, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Translated in English under the title of *Syndicalism and the Co-operative Commonwealth*, Oxford, 1913.



Roller's old work almost exactly.<sup>1</sup> The General Strike is not dead, although many of its former advocates have become Bolshevik in policy. There is, in fact, a considerable place for it in any revolution, though not quite so considerable as its devotees proclaim.

A purely passive strike—a *grève à bras croisés*—has no possible chance of making a revolution. An ordinary strike for non-revolutionary purposes can be very successful and exert surprising concessions from the capitalist. But this is just because of its limited objective. Its aim is to make it more uncomfortable for the capitalist to resist the workers' desires than to grant them. This is only possible when the harm done to the capitalist by a continued strike would exceed his loss by granting the demands. Therefore it can only succeed when the strikers' demands do not attack the foundations of the capitalist system. For no temporary loss from a strike can equal the permanent loss of one's business.

It is argued that the workers' idleness would of itself destroy capitalism. If the miners, transport workers and engineers made up their minds firmly (that is the phrase) to strike until the capitalist system fell, and were joined by other essential workers, capitalism *must* fall. The capitalists would starve. But unfortunately it is quite clear that the workers will starve first. If the capitalists are so seriously menaced that they are prepared to fold their arms and wait, then the workers are defeated. With meagre resources and the impossibility of accumulating reserves, they will be broken when the

<sup>1</sup> *The Social General Strike*, by Jack Tanner. Based on the work of Arnold Roller. W.S.F., 1919.

capitalists are merely inconvenienced. It is, however, clear that the workers will not consent to this inevitable defeat. The General Strike, to succeed, must pass into an active phase. The strikers must seize food and run essential services for themselves. And it is then that the military can be brought in to prevent them running these services and to protect the stores. Previously, no doubt, the military can be used. Strike committees will have been arrested ; soldiers may have been blacklegging ; strikers may have been called up. But at this point the use of the military becomes inevitable, if capitalist society has the strength to resist at all. The struggle then becomes ordinary open civil war between the workers who wish (originally) to prevent the strike from collapsing and the military who are being used to protect property. The movement has passed from out of the hands of the pacifists and become Bolshevik.

It must be insisted that the pacifist general strike, the revolution "by industrial action only," leads directly to civil war. It has, indeed, a place in the Bolshevik tactic, but it is misleading to speak as though it does not involve bloodshed. To be successful a general strike must always at some point come upon this crucial moment and either turn into an active, fighting revolution, or accept defeat. We find this is true of the very examples selected by the General Strike advocates to prove the all-sufficiency of their weapon. There is not one of the instances brought forward by Herr Roller and revived by Mr Tanner<sup>1</sup> to which it does not apply. The point

<sup>1</sup> See Arnold Roller, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10, 27. Tanner *op. cit.*, p. 7.

is perhaps clearest in the account of the "first General Strike of modern times"—the strike at Alcoy, Spain, in July, 1874. We are informed that "In the struggle with the police and armed middle class the workers were victorious. They took possession of the archives and civil registers containing the titles of property. The full accomplishment of the reconstruction, however, was prevented by the troops, who were sent to reconquer the city."

Exactly. To win out, the revolutionary General Strike must pass out of the negative phase, in which the workers wait with folded arms, into the positive, when they attempt to take control, organise and so forth. Instantly they come into conflict with the troops, just as in any other revolution.

This, however, merely means that the General Strike by itself cannot make the revolution. It does not mean that the General Strike has no part in the revolution. The probable course of a revolution in Western countries is shown by the course of events on the Clyde, in Belfast and in Winnipeg, 1919. Even so, however, it must be remembered that the Bolshevik revolution in Russia was not the result of a general strike.

It appears—if the digression may be permitted—that the course of a "Bolshevik revolution" in Western Europe would be something like this. The beginning is a local general strike—a general strike confined to one area. Alternatively it may be a national strike in an essential industry. But in any case to produce a revolutionary situation it must spread quickly. For if the Government is permitted to use all its power against a single industry or district in revolt, that industry or district will pretty

soon become tired of its heroic position, and, in fact, will almost certainly be defeated by the action of workers in other industries who remain at work, which under these circumstances is practically blacklegging. Let us suppose that the strike spreads. To be of use to the revolution it must spread to immediately vital industries. The Triple Alliance, and not the Trade Union Congress or the General Federation of Trade Unions, is the potential revolutionary force of British Trade Unionism. The opinion of the cotton-spinners and the goldsmiths, however enlightened, counts for nothing at this point: the opinion of the miners, transport workers, postal workers and engineers counts for everything. Once these industries are tied up, the revolutionary situation develops rapidly. Provided that the demands of the strikers are sufficiently far-reaching to provoke obstinate resistance, anything may happen. The national leaders, even if they are not arrested, lose all control over their local branches. The leadership devolves upon the local strike committee which begins to turn into a Soviet. Instantly, of course, the strike committee should add to its numbers representatives of the co-operative stores, so as to fend off the day of starvation. All the same, as we have observed above, the day will come when it is necessary for the workers to take control of food supplies, etc., to save the strike from collapse. Here is the revolutionary moment.<sup>1</sup> If the troops which are used to prevent this fraternise with the workers and refuse to obstruct their re-

<sup>1</sup> Governmental provocation or accidental circumstances may bring this moment earlier. But even if this is not so, it must inevitably come at this point.



organisation, then the revolution is half won ; if they fight and meet with defeat from the ex-service men, the result is the same. Half defeated, half converted, their resistance slackens. District after district comes under strike committee rule. As each district emerges to freedom, vital services work again. The life-blood begins to run once more in the Soviet regions. In the districts under capitalism every movement of the forces is weighted with iron chains. No railways run, no telegraphs can be used. With Capital thus shackled, Labour has a chance of victory ; otherwise it could never attempt to resist the enormous powers at the disposal of a modern government.

From this outline of the probable course of a Bolshevik revolution two or three deductions may be drawn. The first is the need for industrial unionism. The industrial unionists, syndicalists, guild socialists and so forth are by no means wasting their time. The beginning of the revolution will, if it comes, probably come through the agency of the great industrial unions. It is also true that it is probably better, from the revolutionary point of view, that the strategic industries such as mining, etc., should be organised in separate industrial unions and not in one big union with all workers. In this way the fighting forces of the Bolshevik revolution will not be held back unnecessarily. The railway-men need not await the signal of the teachers, nor will they be precipitated into hasty and ill-considered action by the violent revolutionary sentiments of the musical instrument makers. On the other hand, the propagandists of the Workers' Committee idea have in their mind the form of organisation which



will correspond to the Russian Soviet.<sup>1</sup> But they are surely in error in attempting to create previously an organisation which should arise spontaneously out of the needs of the moment. The delegates elected apathetically, in time of peace, will have to be renewed in any case if they are adequately to represent their constituents in a time of serious crisis. The sleepy branch president who is almost automatically elected to every committee has few revolutionary possibilities. Moreover, a Workers' Committee already elected might quite easily not represent, or under-represent, the trades first involved in a strike, in which case a new strike committee would, of course, push it aside.

This conception of the course of the revolution modifies slightly the probable composition of a Soviet, if the word may be allowed. The revolutionary council would first consist only of representatives of the vital industries leading the strike. Later there are added representatives of the other workers and of the co-operators. Finally soldiers' representatives appear. This composition, especially the presence of co-operative representatives, is a variation from the orthodox Russian model. We shall consider its effects and possibilities later. Meanwhile we must remark that although practically any grievance may precipitate a revolutionary general strike, no such strike has a chance of success unless propaganda and discussion has united a majority of the workers and has undermined the fidelity of the army and navy. The demands of the strikers must also be such that capital will not readily grant them. The fatal strike may, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> See J. T. Murphy, *The Workers' Committee*.

quite well be directed against some act of governmental tyranny, because then the prestige of authority would be impaired by a defeat of the officials.

However, to abandon this speculation about the future of Bolshevism and to return to the industrial pacifists. The capacity of human beings for evading an unpleasant fact is limitless. There has never been a lack of people willing to produce short cuts to avoid a long and painful process. And when it appears that only through an actual revolution, with all that that involves of possible suffering, anger and bloodshed, can the workers be freed, all sorts of patent plans for a peaceful evolutionary revolution are presented, from playing with the currency to giving a bonus to small shopkeepers. Among these nostrums, it is to be feared, is to be counted the scheme of "encroaching control" emanating from National Guild sources in England, or rather Scotland.<sup>1</sup> It has been given the blessing of the Paisley Trades and Labour Council and seen the light as a pamphlet.<sup>2</sup>

The proposal in this pamphlet is for the election "by and from all the Trade Unionists, skilled and unskilled," in every workshop, of a Works Committee, of a Departmental Committee and of an Allied Trades Committee. The functions of these as outlined are mainly ordinary trade union functions. The proposals, which are framed with an eye to the engineering industry almost exclusively, are an

<sup>1</sup> R. P. Dutt (reference as before) defines this as "encroaching control, which neither controls nor encroaches." This, however, seems rather prejudiced.

<sup>2</sup> *Towards Industrial Democracy*, by W. Gallacher and J. Paton.

attempt to introduce industrial unionism without mentioning it, to superimpose industrial unionism upon the existing craft organisations. This is, of course, an interesting proposal, but has no revolutionary character. The sting is Section III.d. of p. 2, where it is proposed that the Departmental Committee shall become "the sole medium of contract between the firm and the workers." Thereby the capitalist would relax his hold on workshop discipline and lose his power of fixing rates. Proceeding from this beginning, the workers would eventually take over the management altogether and be able to "force up contract prices to a point that would approximate to the full exchange value of the product" which would be the knock-out blow for capitalism. This conclusion is unjustified; no action short of expropriation, violent or otherwise, can prevent the capitalists continuing to raise prices, or, failing that, closing down their businesses.

Ingenious, however, is the idea of conquering capitalism by degrees, so that at no one point would the capitalist have to make a stand. It presumes, of course, that the capitalist class will not have the perspicacity to see where events are leading. It presumes that the vital industries of the country (such as the railways) can be held up frequently without producing a revolutionary situation. It presumes that industrial unions can carry out continual strikes for a little more share in control—many of which will be unsuccessful—without damaging the fabric of industrial unionism and giving new life to the declining craft unions. All these points are worthy of consideration. But final is the objection that the proposal to contract

collectively with the works management is not a revolutionary project at all, but counter-revolutionary. It is no use the authors saying that it is not "a share in control": it quite obviously is a share in control, as much as that provided by a Whitley Council. As soon as a group of workers control the inner workings of a capitalist shop they begin to have an interest in the working of that shop and particularly in its continuance. The operation of this proposal would detach them as successfully from the revolutionary proletariat as profit-sharing has detached the London gas-workers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Of course this analysis is not complete. But it cannot be made complete until the idea of encroaching control has been outlined properly, and proposals made which would apply to other industries as well as to engineering. Till then it is difficult to criticise.

## XI

### THE SOVIET

THE new type of organisation, which both won the victory for Bolshevism and forms the basis of the new society, is the Soviet. It is of course true in a sense that Bolshevism "is distinct from Sovietism." The Russian peasant and worker is quite often prepared to curse the local commissary very heartily : he shows an unexpected determination to keep his Soviet. Theoretically the Bolsheviks might be ousted from the Soviets by a Menshevik majority, and the power of the Soviets yet remain. In practice, however, the Bolsheviks are really the only party which demand "all power to the Soviets"; the fall of Bolshevism does, and for some time must, mean the fall of the Soviets. Even if a "Leftward" group—say the Left Social Revolutionaries—gained control of the Soviets, their policy would have to follow the Bolshevik lines already laid out for them. There is no real difference in theory between Bolshevism and Sovietism. The Bolsheviks may be ousted from control of the Soviet on personal grounds. That is all.

The essential distinguishing feature of the Soviet is election by industrial units, by an electorate consisting only of workers, manual or mental. In its first unmodified form, therefore, it is an organisation of producers only. It has two functions : (1) the carrying on of the revolutionary advance to victory ;



(2) the governing of the Republic after victory. Its composition will be found to vary as these two functions shade into one another.

Like many other fertile devices, the Soviet idea originates in England, and was carried into practice elsewhere. During the "high and far-off times," when British labour was inspired by really revolutionary feeling, Robert Owen, the first of all men to put before the proletariat Socialism as its aim, placed himself at the head of the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, a vast revolutionary organisation containing some 500,000 members. One of his followers, a certain J. E. Smith, produced, to the discomfiture and annoyance of his leader, a plan for dispensing with the House of Commons altogether, and "we shall have a House of Trades," he wrote in *The Crisis*, an Owenite journal. "We shall have a new set of boroughs when the unions are organised: every trade shall be a borough and every trade shall have a council of representatives to conduct its affairs."

We should call this a Soviet. However, the Grand National Trades Union collapsed. Robert Owen dwindled into an insignificant, boring propagandist. Smith became the Reverend James Elishama Smith, took to editing *The Family Herald* and forswore evil ways. And his casual remarks about this new form of organisation lay hidden in the files of the forgotten *Crisis*. It probably never even crossed his own mind again.

The next appearance of this form of proletarian organisation is accidental, but it is at least in bodily form and not merely on paper. It is in February, 1848, in Paris. The streets are still filled with the

rejoicing people who have driven out King Louis Philippe. The Republic is proclaimed. One is permitted to sing the *Marseillaise*. Baron Rothschild has started a fund for the wounded heroes of the Barricades. He has also publicly embraced a worker, not, apparently, previously selected for the purpose. One rejoices. Not everywhere, however, for the Provisional Government of mild republicans is very uneasy. Outside is an uproarious and extremist crowd, which will insist upon cheering the Government, sending in deputations, shaking hands, demanding speeches, to the point of physical exhaustion. M. Lamartine, the poet who is writing the manifesto on Foreign Policy, has his periods all disarranged: M. Arago, the scientist, dragged from his observatory, is in a furious rage. If this were all! But in the Government itself are two Socialists, one of them Louis Blanc, the only man in all Europe who has a practical programme. The wretched moderates shiver whenever he opens his mouth: the Paris crowd, they know, will enforce the most outrageous demands, if he desires. Suddenly someone has a bright idea: M. Blanc has a plan of Labour organisation, is it not? The Government is deeply interested and begs him to appoint a commission—he has full powers to appoint a commission—which shall prepare a report to be presented to the National Assembly when it meets. The Government desires a most profound study to be made of M. Blanc's proposals; it is most impressed by them.

Blanc, his vanity flattered, accepts and goes off to arrange for his commission, successfully removed from the seat of affairs. The moderates thought themselves safe. However, the commission, called

from its place of meeting the Luxembourg Commission, was elected by trades from the various workshops and elected a committee on which also some attempt was made to represent the various trades. This, the representative, industry by industry, of the Paris proletariat, not merely accepted and "pushed" enthusiastically Blanc's Socialist ideals, but ran "red" candidates for the National Assembly, made itself a centre of propaganda and acted as the workers' representative in the incessant strikes of the moment, enforcing such unheard-of conditions as an eight-hour day, minimum wage, etc., in certain trades. Proudhon proposed that a similar organisation should be started in every French town.

The National Assembly, when it met, was full of reactionaries and the Luxembourg Assembly found it as well to lie low, until vicious provocation led to the Socialist revolt of the Paris proletariat in June. The Luxembourg Assembly at once resumed its prominence, led the revolt, met with complete defeat after a three days' battle and disappeared. Neither Marx nor anyone else observed the importance of this form of revolutionary assembly. Yet the first Soviet had come and gone.

Nearly half-a-century elapses before we come to a reappearance. This time it is the real Soviet—the St Petersburg Soviet of 1905. During the abortive Russian revolution of that year a strike committee was formed in St Petersburg to carry on the general strike which forced the granting of the October Manifesto. It contained delegates from practically all the Petrograd strikers, which included many middle-class elements. During the revolution it began to lose that strictly local character which is

typical of the Soviet—arising as it does from a strike committee—by admitting peasants from the south of Russia. These tendencies had not time to develop, however, before the Soviet was swept away in December.

The present form of the Soviet is, of course, that exemplified in Russia.<sup>1</sup> Record exists in English of the 1918 (April) election of the Moscow City Soviet. The type of the election then used was adopted practically in its entirety as the standard type of election for urban Soviets. The regulations said :

“The electors will be informed of the date of elections by notices posted in prominent places in all corridors of the factory not later than two days before the elections ; in case of the Trade Unions the electors are informed by the usual method employed in calling meetings to elect officials. A meeting, at which not less than two-thirds of the electors are present will be considered a quorum. . . .

“Establishments employing 200-500 workers have one representative ; those employing over 500 send one representative for every 500. Establishments employing less than 200 workers combine for the purpose of representation with other small establishments. Ward Soviets send two deputies, elected at a plenary session. Trade Unions with a membership not exceeding 2000 send one deputy ; not exceeding 5000, two deputies ; above 5000, one for every 5000 workers, but not more than ten deputies for any one Union. The Moscow Trades Council sends five deputies.

<sup>1</sup> See “How a Soviet is elected” (People’s Russian Information Bureau), extracts from *Pravda’s* election news, and Jerome Davis in the *N. Y. Nation*, 6th September 1919, Pt. II.



"Political parties send thirty deputies to the Soviet : the seats are allotted to the parties in proportion to their membership, providing that the parties include four representatives of industrial establishments and organised workers. Representatives of five non-Russian National Socialist parties are also given one seat each." <sup>1</sup>

The total number of members of the Moscow Soviet was stated to be 803.

We observe here that the workers are represented in no less than four capacities or functions. By far the most important category is the industrial representation. This requires very little comment. It is clearly a representation of producers only—that is to say, it omits not only the bourgeois, but also the woman who is merely mother and housekeeper, not an industrial worker, and probably such isolated handworkers as remain. The last category is small, but it must be very strongly emphasised that any system of organisation, such as, for example, certain types of Syndicalism, which bases itself solely upon the producer, will in fact disfranchise the majority of women. For various reasons, however, this section of the representatives has the most vitality. It represents units not specially created, or called together, for the purpose of the election, but already existent and functioning every day. The deputies are deputies of an actual live organism, which are in continual activity every day—not, like an M.P. or Congressman, representative of a more or less artificial division created for that purpose. The representation springs from the actually existing organ-

<sup>1</sup> The Jewish "Bund," the Polish Socialist Party (Left), Polish and Lithuanian S.D.P., Lettish S.D.P., Jewish S.D.P.



isms in society, not from blocks of persons, divided up like slabs of pudding, regardless of their interests and manner of life, just for the purpose of representation. When, in addition, we remember that any deputy can be recalled by the electorate and that he represents the small electorate of 500—in other words, is personally known to his electors—it is clear that, within the limits set to it, this system provides perhaps the nearest approach to pure democracy possible. The absence of any possible recall, the huge size of electorates and, still more, the ignoring of the fundamental—that is, economic—divisions of modern society are powerful contributory causes of the failure of Parliamentarism. The removal of them is a great step.

The deputies of the next section are deceptive in appearance. Not personally, of course, but in that they seem to be that which they are not. Elected by wards—*i.e.* on a territorial basis<sup>1</sup>—they would

<sup>1</sup> They are elected, be it observed, “by Ward Soviets.” It is possible that these Ward Soviets also are elected upon a functional basis, not a territorial. I have presumed that they are not, however, as otherwise the representation seems meaningless.

It is convenient to give here a list of those classes excluded from representation upon Soviets in Russia :

- (1) Persons who employ hired labour for profit.
- (2) Persons living off unearned income.
- (3) Private merchants, etc.
- (4) Clergy.
- (5) Ex-police agents.
- (6) Lunatics and minors.
- (7) Persons disfranchised for a period for specific offences.

It is clear that housewives are represented, as attempts to organise them and their vote have been described by observers from Russia. In addition, an observer who has been in Russia (Mr George Lansbury) assured me that this was so.

seem to be the poor remnants of our old friend the State. If so, they are a sorry remnant. They have certainly lost the appearance and functions of the State. However, in fact, they perform another and more useful function. They represent the consumers. Inefficiently, no doubt, but they do represent him, and her, to a large extent, and thereby re-enfranchise the womenfolk.

Many propagandists, especially Socialist Labour Party propagandists, speak of the division between producers and consumers as foolishness. In a congress of producers' representatives, they say, on any given point—say, a claim by the shoemakers—all the other deputies, miners, carpenters, etc., are automatically consumers' deputies, and view the claim from the consumer's point of view. But in fact this is a misleading statement. The producers' organisations, even if they include isolated workers, do not include the majority of women, who are thus disfranchised. The textile and other delegates who are alleged to represent "the consumers" are not elected for that purpose, but as industrial delegates. They may at the most represent the interest which the whole industry or factory has in seeing that such-and-such machines are delivered to it, and certain types of coal in place of others which it cannot burn. They cannot possibly voice the housewife's opinion on the disgraceful quality of the marg. supplied, which is nevertheless of considerable importance. Moreover, the man whom one elects to represent one industrially, one's shop steward, is by no means the man whom one, or one's wife, would necessarily choose to watch the quality of the gas supply, complain about the lack of necessary commodities at

the local store, etc. For different functions different representatives are needed.

The representation of the consumers in the Moscow Soviet is far from perfect. It fails for two reasons: (1) because it is not specifically a consumers' representation and designed and named as such because it represents *house dwellers* and not (as does the co-operative movement in England to-day) consumers as such; (2) because, therefore, the major claims which the interests of the housewife have are not recognised in the system of voting. In any Socialist society there will be necessary three forms of representation: (a) representation of the producers, by industrial units; (b) representation of the consumers, by industrial units—that is to say, representation of the interests that, say, the Bow match-makers have in the character of the timber supplied to their industry. This form of consumer's interest may be adequately represented, however, in a pure society of producers, as was observed above; (c) representation of the ultimate consumer—the eater of buns, the buyer of household stores, the rider upon trams, etc., who has a right to demand that her coal should burn, that the stores available should be those that she desires, and that trams should be frequent at convenient shopping hours. This demand is but insufficiently expressed by the Ward Soviet system.

The further divisions are less in importance. The representatives of the Trade Unions ("Professional Alliances") and of the Trades Council next demand our consideration. The majority of Russian trade unions are industrial in character. No information is available as to their internal constitution, except

that it is democratic and that commonly non-party delegates outnumber the Communists. It is not clear, therefore, whether they possess machinery which would enable them to represent the "craft" point of view. We will presume that they do not.

In the larger units (regional, provincial, All-Russia congresses) they perform an obviously useful function. In these bodies the vote of any single group of workers, such as the miners, is entirely swamped and disappears in the general Soviet representation. It is essential that the miners, railwaymen, etc., must be directly represented upon these bodies, if the workers' control of industry is to be a fact. But this is not all. These representatives, in both the local Soviets and the larger congresses, are, in fact, responsible, under the Commissaries, for the running of industry. Councils, or boards, of national economy are organised under the local, regional and All-Russia Soviets. The first two types consist of three classes: the Trade Union representatives; representatives of the Soviet and of co-operative societies, and management representatives who are not to form more than one-third of the whole membership. Thus the trade unions, by direct and indirect representation, have a commanding voice on the Boards, which are by far the most important organs for the control of industry. Similarly, at the centre they have an absolute majority in the Commissariat of Labour, and can reverse or veto the decisions of the Commissary. This Commissariat deals chiefly with wages and internal management and sanitation.<sup>1</sup>

The lesser Boards are subject to the Supreme

<sup>1</sup> See W. T. Goode, *Bolshevism at Work*, Allen & Unwin, 2s. 6d.



Board, which shares the control of them with the local Soviets. This Supreme Board is also a Trade Union body. It consists of the old All-Russia Board of Workers' Control, on which the trade unions were in an overwhelming majority, and representatives of the Commissaries. "Learned persons" with an advisory vote also attend. This constitution should be noted, as the Supreme Board is sometimes spoken of as a despotic body.

The last division is trifling in numbers—less than one-twentieth of the whole membership. I refer to the thirty-five seats allotted to the representatives of political parties. Possibly this is a transitional measure, possibly not. In the latter case its reason is merely that the hazard of election may give many seats to a party, yet the one or two men whom the party regards as essential—and it may be presumed to be a good judge—be left out. For example, in England the Labour Party secured many seats at the 1919 election, but had to weep bitter tears over the pure accident that Mr Arthur Henderson, whom for reasons best known to itself it thought to be indispensable, was not among the successful members. This will always happen under all electoral systems. Mr Neil Maclean (let us say) will find himself "out," because he contested a poor constituency, while Mr Albert Edward Jones, whose only qualification is that he has represented for forty-five years the compositors on the local Trades Council, finds himself the happy possessor of a "safe seat." It is good for nobody, and certainly not fulfilling the desires of the electorate, that a party should be deprived of its brains.

Transitional, however, undoubtedly is the fact



that this section has ordinary, not advisory, votes.<sup>1</sup> But in many ways this Soviet form remains transitional. It has not yet shed all its primitive characteristics. We have observed before that the first function of the Soviet is revolution. Now during a revolutionary period only those sections which have revolutionary power will be represented effectually or have a claim to representation, or, in fact, have any power at all, whatever representative devices are adopted. However well intentioned the deputies may be, when the teachers' deputy favours instant action and the soldiers' deputy opposes, the latter will outweigh the former, even if he be in a minority. Therefore the first form of the Soviet consists of delegates of only two sections—proletarian workers—that is, industrial producers—and soldiers. The representation of the former, we observe, is gradually being modified by the introduction of the representation of other sections of society and of differing points of view, which, though they have not the revolutionary “punch” behind them, are nevertheless of value to an ordered state. The representation of the latter is, fortunately, no longer necessary—in Moscow, anyway.<sup>2</sup> The rural unit, it may be observed, is the Mir, the village assembly of peasants which does not permit of any such complexities and subdivisions. Its form is unvarying and invariable. Only with the progress of co-operative farming are any alterations conceivable, and then not many.

At this point we may conveniently outline the

<sup>1</sup> Probably this is already altered.

<sup>2</sup> I do not know how the military representation on the Soviet is arranged, but it still exists.

vast superstructure which culminates in the All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Misconception of its character is very common owing to its apparent complexity. Mr MacDonald, as we have already observed, seems to believe that it is a system of concentric circles, of Congresses of Congresses, fitting one inside the other like a Chinese toy. The Soviets elect a County Congress, the County a Provincial Congress, the Provincial a Regional one, the Regional the All-Russia. This conception is absolutely false, as a more accurate study of the Constitution will show. The system is far more complex, but, at the same time, the All-Russia representation is more direct.

There are two types of local Soviet which form the unitary cell of the Soviet organism, the town or urban and rural (Volost) Soviets. The town Soviet we have considered minutely already. The town Soviets are directly represented at the All-Russia Congress. There is no intervening body of any kind (Section 25 of the Constitution). This is the first and most essential point to grasp. The urban organisation is perfectly simple and direct.

It is the rural districts which give rise to such complexity as exists. In the first place, the Volost Soviet—corresponding roughly to an English Rural District Council—is not a body which is exactly the same in all districts. In some it is an ordinary Soviet elected by village meetings (Constitution: Section 57, note) and in some a congress of village Soviets. In all cases these Volost Soviets form the unit of rural organisation, as the town Soviet of urban organisation. From them arise two forms of congress, one of which is intermediary between the Volost and the All-Russia Congress, another which is not.

The first category consists of the Provincial (Gubernia) Congress alone. This contains representatives of the Volost Soviets and the town Soviets. It elects representatives to the All-Russia Congress. Therefore the All-Russia Congress consists solely of representatives of town Soviets and Gubernia Congresses.

It would appear from this that the towns are doubly represented. On this it is absolutely impossible to speak with certainty, but two alternative explanations exist. The first would run as follows :— All Soviets and Congresses are divided into four sections, which are largely autonomous—workers, peasants, soldiers and Cossacks. The first (town workers) category in the Gubernia Congress would not vote for the All-Russia delegation. Or, secondly, and more probably : The representation of towns in the All-Russia Congress is one delegate per 25,000 voters. Now the number of Russian towns with 25,000 voters, which implies a population of over 100,000, is not very large. These comparatively few great towns would be represented on the All-Russia Congress directly, but not on the Provincial Congresses. The numerous smaller towns would be represented not directly but via the Provincial Congresses. But all this is conjectural and typical of the irritating obscurity which impedes us so frequently in investigating Russian conditions.

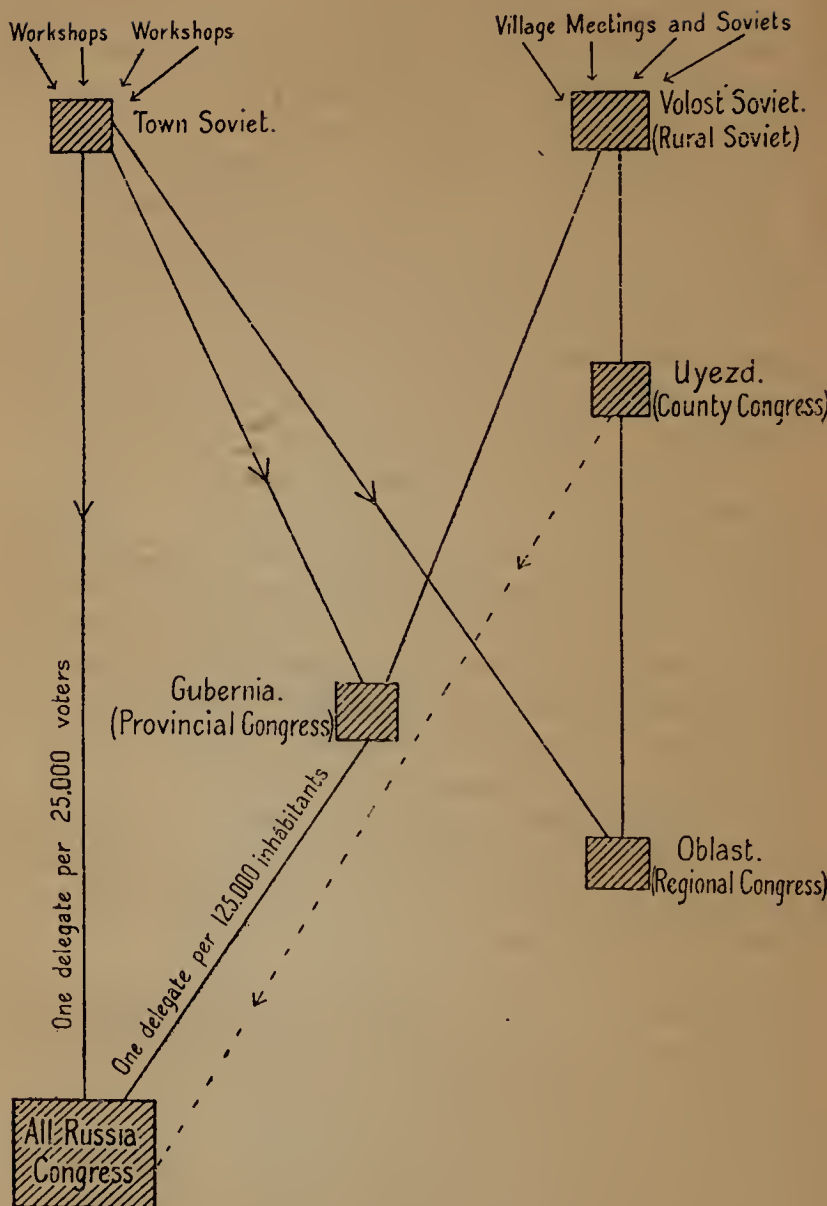
We have now seen how the supreme power, the All-Russia Soviet Congress, is elected. It remains to deal with those other congresses which have no direct relation to the All-Russia Congress. Firstly, the Volost (rural district) Soviets meet in a County Congress (Uyezd Congress). This Congress contains

no urban representatives, merely Volost representatives. On occasion, if the Provincial Congress has not met in time before the calling of an All-Russia Congress, the County Congresses elect the deputies to the All-Russia Congress. In this case, of course, the question of double town representation would not arise. From the Uyezd or County Congress and from the town Soviets is elected the Regional or Oblast Congress. In this body meet the representatives of town and country. It has, as I have said, no connection at all with the All-Russia Congress.

In the election of deputies from town and country a uniform proportion is observed. The deputies from the country are reckoned by the number of inhabitants (presumably owing to the absence of exact registers), in towns by the number of voters. It is taken that there will be one voter in five inhabitants, Russia being a land of large families and there being a considerable number of disfranchised. For example, at the All-Russia Congress towns have one delegate per 25,000 *voters*, country districts (via the Gubernia Congress) one per 125,000 *inhabitants*. Similarly on the Gubernia Congress the towns have one delegate for 2000 voters, the country one delegate for 10,000 inhabitants.

The plan on p. 146, finally, may make the constitution clear.

The changes in form of the urban Soviet, to resume, are accompanied by changes and diminutions of function. During a revolution—the actual days, weeks or months of the overturning and disarming of the enemy class—the Soviet is all-powerful. It is necessary that it should have full powers,





without reference to anyone, to take over such-and-such factories, arrest such-and-such agents provocateurs and counter-revolutionaries, take measures to assure food supply and disintegrate the local White Guards, etc. In times of serious disorganisation such local initiative is indispensable. The plausible gentleman who arrives, stating that he is the official commissary, may quite well be an adventurer who has slit the real commissary's throat, seized his papers and valuables and left him in the ditch a mile away. On the other hand, the Soviet's power is "despotism tempered by assassination"; it is equally necessary that the central revolutionary authority should have power to suppress at once, in the interests of the whole community, a Soviet which "goes white" and turns to insurrection, or which is seized by a sort of Hebertist fury of persecution and repression, a kind of revolutionary sadism which is apparently latent in some people. Short of provoking this extreme measure, however, the local Soviets can more or less do as they please.

This loose and cheerful anarchism very quickly comes to an end. The unpleasantnesses of humanity, though they may be due to capitalism, cannot be eradicated at once. In Russia, for example, many factories and groups of factories began to produce very little and sell at high prices, thereby gaining for their members a relatively privileged position. If all the town's products were consumed by the townspeople, this in time would no doubt have righted itself, although the members of professions and trades not of vital and immediate necessity might have been left in a permanently inferior position. But there are very few industries of which

that is still true: most industries produce for the whole country, or at least for large districts. Further, and worse, the absence of any authoritative national (and in the end international) co-ordination of supply and distribution leads at once to plethora in some regions and starvation in another. There are also certain vital industries, among which are all forms of transport and extraction of coal and oil, which must be supervised by a national authority. Finally, in every Socialist community, the ultimate veto and when necessary controlling power in all economic matters must rest with the whole community, unless the fundamental principle of communal ownership is to be rejected. For ownership without control is a meaningless phrase.

Thus we find that the distribution and rationing of most materials, the authoritative decision as to how much must be produced, where it shall be sent and for what purposes, etc., must be controlled nationally by the force of circumstances. It means, in fact, that the national book-keeping—that is, all financial control—must be centralised. To this supervision of production and distribution by the central economic council—in Russia the Supreme Board of National Economy with its centro-textile, centro-sugar, etc., sections—are allied certain other public services which it is impossible to conduct by local authority only—transport, justice (to a certain degree), education, the army and navy and so forth. The degree to which these are capable of decentralisation can only be discovered empirically; the existence of central authority in some degree alone can be postulated. Of course nothing here said excludes the possibility of democracy within these various

services and industries supervised. But it does mean, in fact, that the local democracy can at the best only have undisputed control of workshop management, and will extend to hours and pay and other questions only so far as the central authority, which alone knows the national requirements and production, can permit.

Here we perceive that the all-powerful organ of revolution, the Soviet, has been sadly diminished. No doubt it retains all local administration and very large powers of administration and initiation in the various public services nominally under the central power—the more the better, on any theory—and is the centre of all the local life and culture there is. But though it is a complete replica of the central organisation on the side of the humanities, in industry it has lost its crown. Practically, with the workshop committee on the one hand and the central industrial unit on the other, there is very little left to it but to supervise the repartition of the various supplies which arrive, and of those which are made and consumed locally. It is probable that even this is a matter for the local board of economy.

How far are these actual orientations and latent implications of Sovietism applicable to Western industry? How far are they agreed to and realised by the Western sections of the Third International?

The second question can be dealt with first, as it leads directly to the other, and is more susceptible to a complete answer. The Socialist Labour Party (S.L.P.) is the only Western Bolshevik organisation which has issued a serious and thoughtful indication of its ultimate aims in the industrial sphere. Its Platform reads as follows :—

“The Communist form of organisation . . . is dual in character—*i.e.* industrial and residential. The unit of organisation industrially is the Workshop or Yard Committee wherein the workers are organised as workers irrespective of craft, grade or sex. These Committees are co-ordinated by the formation of Works or Plant Committees, composed of delegates from each Workshop or Yard Committee. The Plant or Works Committee are co-ordinated by delegates from each of these committees in a village, town, city or district, forming a Workers’ Council, in which there are also delegates from the Residential Committee, these latter being the units of the social aspects of the organisation.

“The Residential or Ward Committee, the unit of organisation at the point of residence, is composed of delegates elected in the ward where they reside to focus the needs, etc., associated with this part of communal life. The electorate for the Ward Committees consists only of those who render social service to the community.

“The Workers’ Council, which thus unites within itself all phases of social activity, forms internally whatever Departmental and Executive Committees the complexities of administration demand.

“The Regional or National organisation is formed by the convening of congresses of delegates from all the Workers’ Councils, which elect the Regional or National Administrative Committees in similar manner to the local councils.”

This plan, it will be observed, omits the separate representation of political parties—a minor matter—omits the trade union representatives, and omits

any reference to rural organisation. But, essentially, it differs little from the Russian Soviet system. Having thus analysed (1) the actual composition, so far as it is ascertainable, of a Russian Soviet, (2) the Western Sovietist programme, it remains for us to consider what modifications, if any, are necessary to adapt it to Western society, and what will be its results upon the political structure of the nation.



## XII

### THE FUTURE OF THE SOVIET

PERHAPS the best method of estimating what will be the effect of a Soviet revolution upon the political structure of any modern community will be to go directly to the central point of the present structure, the State. When the effect of the various functional subdivisions implied by a Soviet constitution has been considered, and the functions removed from the present State have been apportioned, the whole structure of the future society, so far as it is possible to take a glimpse into the future, will have become clear.

The first thing which it is necessary to decide about the State is : " What is it ? " This, of course, depends upon the previous question : " What does it do ? " The functions which it performs are, as almost always, the only sure criteria of its character. Now the view which has the first claim upon our attention is the orthodox Marxist—that is to say, the Bolshevik—view. It is to be found, for those who care for the labour of digging it out, in various of the smaller works of Marx, particularly in *The Gotha Programme*, but it has been restated more conveniently recently by Lenin in his *The State and Revolution*. We may ignore the bitter controversy as to whether the views there defended are or are not orthodox and pure Marxism. It will at least be allowed that for specifically Bolshevik theory

Vladimir Ilyitch Ulianov, known as Nikolai Lenin, is an unimpeachable authority.

The State, it is generally said, is the organ of class oppression. It is the executive committee of the capitalist class and therefore will disappear with a Socialist revolution. Strictly speaking, this formula should read "the executive committee of the —— class," the gap being filled in by the suitable adjective, "capitalist," for example, when speaking of the present day, "feudal noble" previously to the French Revolution, "slave-owning" in Rome, etc. The distinguishing function of the State, under this theory,<sup>1</sup> is its *coercive* power. It does not, for example, "represent the consumer" or (more vaguely) the public. Its interference in economic life and the area covered by its administrations must be strictly limited to the need of protecting or aggrandising the class which it represents. The army, the navy, the police force and the judiciary are the only organs of the State which properly and exclusively appertain to it, because they are solely instruments of coercion. Ministries of Health, of Education, etc., are therefore to be regarded only as second line defences for the capitalists, adjudged advisable for the purpose of supplementing direct coercion by buying off or breaking up the enemy forces. Of course it is possible to regard these—in some of their operations—as due merely to benevolence, in which case they are alogical accretions and generally quickly shaken off. It is in any case rare to find these bodies performing any function which is not directly or indirectly a defence or other source of benefit to the ruling classes.

<sup>1</sup> See Lenin, *op. cit.*, and W. Paul, *The State* (S.L.P. publications).

This is not the place to summarise the historical arguments by which this theory is supported. But if we review mentally the actions and policy of the various states of importance throughout history, beginning with the Assyrian Empire, passing through slave-owning Rome and the caste-ridden Middle Ages, till we come to M. Georges Clemenceau and his Republic, we can perceive that in economic matters at least there is great truth in the Bolshevik contention. In spite of apparently disinterested actions and decades maybe of enlightened policy, it is found that the attitude taken up by the State is that of the defender of the existing economic order. Generally the most powerful party in the State openly gives as its aim the conservation of the existing order: invariably its opponents advocate certain small alterations which, in their opinion, will make the position impregnable and the structure of the State safe from revolution.

It results from this theory that the State does not disappear under Bolshevism. The State is not any given democratic or aristocratic political machine, but the coercive power. Obviously, therefore, during a Soviet revolution the State remains. It is necessary for the purpose of defending and aggrandising a class—viz. the proletariat. The blank in the definition given above is filled in with a different adjective and the State becomes “the executive committee of the *proletarian* class.” Of course the aims of this State differ. Its aim is the absorption of other classes into the now freed proletariat—that is to say, its aim is its own extinction. For with the disappearance of the old bourgeois class, aloof from the proletariat, sabotaging and resisting it, the organ

of class coercion must disappear. The State disappears *pari passu* with the old bourgeoisie. This process is called by Engels the "withering away" of the State. "The State," says Lenin,<sup>1</sup> "will be able to wither away completely when society has realised the formula: 'From each according to his abilities to each according to his needs.'" The ultimate aim, therefore, of Bolshevism is the destruction of the State, just as it is of Anarchism. But the Bolsheviks are not Anarchists because they do not proceed immediately to their goal and destroy the State at once, thus achieving their end (as the Anarchists think possible) in twenty-four hours or so. Instead of holding that once the oppressive weight of capitalism is removed man, like a steel rod, will spring back immediately into a healthier, saner society, the Bolshevik holds that this is Utopian and that an intermediary period is necessary, a transitional and socialising period in which the State persists. This transitional period Lenin calls Socialism, and the ultimate free society Communism.

This is perfectly correct and adequate as regards the Marxist state. But there are other definitions and conceptions of the State which claim consideration. It is frequently said that "the function of the State is sovereignty." In one sense this is clearly only a professional and detached manner of stating the definition we have already considered, which has an angry and propagandist sound. The State's function is sovereignty is only another way of saying that it is the organ for the exercise of the dominance of the dominant class, which is the Marxist definition. As a formula it has the advantage of an

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 99.



apparent impartiality, but certainly lacks the clearness and vividness of the Marxist formula. The State, as defined in this way, equally clearly "withers away"; with the approach of anarchist Communism its rôle necessarily becomes progressively less. Sovereignty is extinct as an idea when coercion ceases to exist; or, at least, the "sovereign body" has only a tolerated existence—which is absurd.

If, however, we inspect this formula rather more closely it is possible to extract from it a meaning rather different from that of the Marxist formula. If the distinguishing, essential function of the State is its sovereignty—that is, its supremacy, its existence as the final, unquestionable authority—then its present administrative functions are non-essential, irrelevant. In a Soviet community, therefore, where these functions are obviously taken over by other bodies, there is yet room (it may be argued) for a non-administrative body, which acts simply and solely as sovereign, interfering only when "things go wrong," interests clash, and then issuing a direct and peremptory order. There is, of course, room for such a body in the Soviet system. It would perform a judicial function—that is, it would decide in cases of dispute. Its position in society would correspond roughly to that of the Supreme Court of the United States. Like that body, it might, possibly, and under special circumstances, require and even exercise an initiative. If this body continued to exist—and it seems improbable that it could do anything which could not be done by agreement between the contending bodies, or that its mere *fiat* would reconcile serious opposition—yet if it existed, and professorial persons desired to call



it the State, they might be permitted to do so, without serious injury to anybody. But it would hardly be a justified name, nor are judicial functions commonly thought to be the distinguishing functions of a State. "The American State" is not an approximately correct or in any way reasonable description of the Supreme Court of the United States.

There is yet another theory of the State which is of importance for our purpose. Mr G. D. H. Cole is the best-known and ablest propagandist of Guild Socialism in England. He represents, moreover, not the "Right" of the Guilds movement, but rather the Left Centre or, at least, Left Ineline. The school of thought which he heads is intended, and hopes, to supplant Bolshevik thought as the real revolutionary force in Great Britain. Although originally a middle-class movement, Guild Socialism has now a considerable number of working-class adherents, and it is important to observe where and why Mr Cole, in his new book on *Social Theory*, departs from the revolutionary Marxist position.

It is partly, of course, a difference of method and attitude. It is not his conclusions so much as the way in which he arrives at them which provokes disagreement. It is not the things he says, but the nasty way he says them. He refuses to analyse Society upon a class-war basis. The forms—associations, institutions and so forth, especially the State—which he perceives are no doubt affected and perverted by the class struggle, but exist independently and are prior to it.

"Οὐ γάρ τι νυν γε κάχθεις, ἀλλ' αἰεί ποτε  
 ζῇ ταῦτα, κούδεις οἶδεν ἐξ ὅτου ᾿φάνη."

Society, therefore, is a complex synthesis of "associations, institutions, customs, etc.," each performing its "function." Not only is there a certain difficulty in inserting into this system the class struggle, but we find that when Mr Cole directly attacks revolutionary Marxism, in the person of Mr William Paul (p. 148), these concepts have come to life and assumed a wayward personality of their own which impedes the argument. Paul, he says, has written a book to prove that the State "is the political expression of Capitalism" (this is not quite accurate; see the explanation of Marxist theory above and Paul's book, *The State*). What he has proved is only that while Capitalism exists the State will be "perverted" and bent to its will. Mr Cole speaks of the State as an independent thing being bent by Capitalism, just as Jones minor is bent over by the classics master. But "the State" is no such thing, existing from eternity and modified by capitalism. There is a mass of actual tangible capitalist states, one proletarian state and so forth. "The State" is merely a distillation of these and all past and future states, a faint, unreal metaphor and image, a thing of the mind which is only to be mentioned as an aid to thought and never as a concrete, strong reality, resisting the perverting force of capitalism.

This Guild Socialist battle with Marxism proceeds from Mr Cole's original sin in chapter v., where he defines the State, not by its function, but by its structure. This difference is of importance, and if Mr Cole's method is the correct one, it deals a serious blow to Marxist theory. To summarise, therefore, his argument (p. 90): "In appearance the structure

of states, from despotic to democratic, is essentially different. This is not so, for in all cases they really repose upon one principle—the consent of the governed, which must logically be permitted to change itself into active participation. Despotic states which seem to deny this either claim to be based on (1) tacit consent, or state (2) that they act in conformity with the interests of their subjects ‘and therefore with their real will,’ or (3) are so by divine right. And since God has willed it, man also must, therefore this is the same thing again.”

Let plea No. 1 pass. But plea No. 2 is really rather startling. It cannot surely be offered except with the tongue in the cheek and the finger to the nose. I have a horrible vision of the Anti-Smoking League expressing my “real will” for me, and of myself unable to protest, as my tobacco pouch is looted, “because it is done by my consent.” If we are allowed to presume that people always consent to what is good for them, then the argument becomes less of a jest. But that is a wicked, wicked presumption, which is only made by members of the Fabian Society and by family doctors when prescribing for the children. And it would seem that No. 3, the “divine right” plea, cuts the same way. For if we accept the doctrine of Divine Right, which means that men ought to be willing to live under the despot, we also accept that of Original Sin, which means that infallibly most of them won’t. “Divine Right” is expressly used to indicate that in the user’s mind popular consent does not matter.

But in fact the defences considered by Mr Cole are not those natural to despotism, but those used by surviving despotisms in a democratic world.

They are the defences of a despotism forced to defend itself in its opponent's terms. A good healthy despot—say a baron of King John's reign—would merely say: "There are some people called barons and another kind of people called villeins and serfs. I am a baron, and that's that."

And finally, the principle of the "consent of the governed" does not apply to the proletarian, Soviet state, where, as we have seen, at any given time measures may, actually and theoretically, be carried through by an absolute minority of the whole community. The majority (being a large minority of the proletariat plus the recalcitrant bourgeoisie) may be actively objecting, but it is of the theory of the proletarian state that they should be overridden.

Later, on p. 128, Mr Cole implicitly attacks the Marxist definition by function. The State is not the exclusive wielder of coercive power (and therefore not the supreme executive committee of the dominant class). Trade Unions fine their members. Doctors and lawyers do the most awful things to intruders into their profession. Millionaires, we may add, use Pinkertons.

True enough. But we must make further distinctions. The British Medical Association has coercive powers by special permission of the State, just as has Policeman X. The executive committee of capitalism, that is, permits one given quasi-capitalist section of society, occupying the peculiar half-way position which the clergy, lawyers and doctors do, to regulate its own coercion within certain limits and with forms and penalties prescribed. The coercion is a specific, limited and delegated



privilege. But with Pinkertons and Trade Unions the matter is different. As soon as a Trade Union attempts to make itself compulsory and to make its fines, etc., not mere stage thunder which can be avoided by just resigning membership, it trespasses on the State's power. It is true that even without being compulsory it can privately make things unpleasant for the recalcitrant member, by sending him to Coventry and so on. But the existence of this personal and quiet pressure, with or without a union, is merely proof that the State is not omniscient and cannot prevent odd acts of coercion as long as they are kept fairly dark. It is not a proof that coercion is not its sphere, but merely that it is not suprahuman but shares humanity's limited powers.

As soon as Trade Unions, or Carnegies, attempt openly to take over coercive powers, they invade the power of the State and begin to kill it. Each act of coercion openly done without reference to the State is an attack on it. The habit of such action means that a real breach has been made in the State fabric. Ultimately, in real chaos, where every man and group of men exercises coercion at his own will, there is no State, and it is this very dissipation of coercion that has destroyed it. The seizing of coercive power by Pinkerton's clients means that certain capitalists propose to disregard the executive committee of their whole class. The assumption of similar powers by the unions means that they are becoming the nucleus of the new proletarian state which will smash the old one.

We might, however, discuss the State and its future in the abstract indefinitely. To deal with all



theories and present a final and satisfactory answer would demand a large book on political philosophy. But it may be assumed that "the State," if it is to persist in any recognisable form, must have some economic or semi-economic function. It must be concerned either in the daily life of the people or in something closely related to it. It may be possible, by considering the necessary social function which it performs, to discover whether there will be any place for the State in a Socialist society.

It has been stated—by members of the National Guilds League, in the happy early days when the future of society was being settled once for all—that the State will "represent the consumer." Even in Guild circles this plea is beginning to be obsolete. For it seems doubtful whether a consumer-representing body can legitimately be called the State; it seems quite clear that the State as it now exists is a singularly clumsy means of representing the consumer: it is obvious, finally, that the course of the revolution will make of the present co-operative movement the nucleus of the consumers' organisation. The very first act of the strike committee—the embryo Soviet—when the struggle passes into an acute phase will be to add to itself representatives of the "co-ops" and these will form the nucleus of a consumers' representation.

Nevertheless there are certain "consumptive functions" which seem to demand a body which does not consist only of producers' representatives and representatives of the immediate consumer—the buyer of bread and so on. If we try and tabulate these semi-economic functions, which demand State control, they would seem to be these:

- (1) The co-ordination of production as a whole. In any Socialist society there must be some body to decide the proportion in which capital and labour shall be devoted to various industries.
- (2) The development of new industries—a very serious matter for a Socialist society which might easily fall into a conservative rut.
- (3) The provision of fresh capital for existing industries.
- (4) The allocation of the national product—some authority must be in a position to insist on so much being allotted to the army and navy, education and so on.
- (5) The fixing of prices.
- (6) The representation of the user of certain industries—such as mining and transport—not locally produced and consumed.

All of these questions certainly seem to demand consideration by other bodies than those directly representative of local producers or local consumers. They are functions of national importance. They require a national outlook. Do they not, therefore, form an adequate basis for the retention of the old State machine?

This question may be answered in the negative with a certain amount of confidence. Point (4), indeed, raises a doubt, because it has reference to non-economic services, such as the army, education, justice; but apart from this a joint producer-user organisation would be adequate. Take, for example, (6), the representation of the user of railways. The ordinary casual traveller would be represented—so far as he can be represented—by the ordinary

consumers' organisation growing out of the co-operative movement. So much for the passenger traffic. The users of goods traffic are the productive and distributive industries, represented quite naturally by their industrial representatives. There are no further interests requiring representation. There is no occasion for the retention of the vast and cumbrous old State machinery. There is no possibility of such a machine, if retained, being able, in fact, to veto the will of the combined producing-consuming organisation.

Within the Soviet form, that is, are to be found already represented all the functions in society which need to be represented in these economic and semi-economic matters. This is not to say that the Soviet form is not capable of improvement and will not require modification to be suited to Western conditions. For example, the division between the user and producer type of franchise should be carried right up through the Soviet hierarchy into the Central Executive Committee itself. The object of the Soviet system should be to represent, not to conceal, differences of interest and function. It is also practically certain, as has been already observed, that the user side of the Soviet organisation, in Great Britain anyway, would not grow out of the remnants of the municipal organisation, or be organised in the same way as the municipality, but would arise from the representatives of the "co-ops." This, of course, does not mean that the employees of distributive stores should be deprived of their industrial self-government, but that the "ordering"—the decision as to what goods and what type of goods are wanted in

Stow-in-the-Wold—should lie with the Stow-in-the-Wold co-op.

There is, however, a further and deeper industrial division which is neglected in Soviet theory, with serious consequences. The Soviet form is, within the limits naturally prescribed to it, a most powerful organ. Probably there has never been so powerful an engine since the great Committee of Public Safety in 1793. It has behind it the whole will and force of a compact community, organised upon economic lines which are representative of real divisions. It represents the most passionate and intense desires. In Great Grimsby, for example, a "Soviet" would be a most powerful thing. Practically no power could dislodge the Great Grimsby Soviet. At the worst the inhabitants would live on fish. The meeting of representatives of all the little local trades, of bakers and market-gardeners, with the fishermen, the representatives of big industry (in the Grimsby sense) would give the locality power to stand up to the deadly influence of London. A Great Grimsby culture might begin to arise, a Grimsby style of architecture, and an individual school of poetry.

All the same, it is not every city that will have the same fate as Great Grimsby. In Liverpool, for example, the match works might perhaps be controlled by the local Soviet. But the Soviet could not be allowed to control the sailings for Ireland and America and the arrival and departure of long-distance trains. Nor could the Tonypandy Soviet really be the chief and only authority concerned with the production of Tonypandy coal. The Soviet form represents admirably all local consumers. It represents all local production which is consumed



locally. It represents the interests of all producers in the problems of management, for example. But it does not, and cannot, provide a satisfactory basis for the organisation of industries such as mining and railways, which demand centralisation. In some industries, such as railways, this centralisation in the nature of things must always remain almost unmodified. To talk of a decentralised management of the railways is to preach disorganisation of the railways. Bradford and Leeds cannot possibly both wreak their own will on the time-table. In others, such as mining, the central management may perhaps eventually (but there is no certainty of this) dwindle away into a general financial overseership. But in the meantime those industries which are on a national scale demand a form of industrial democracy which is not the Soviet form. This is provided by the Guild, as outlined in Guild Socialist theory<sup>1</sup>—a democratic industrial unit growing out of the trade unions.

Let us take for our example a Lancashire or Moscow cotton-mill. In Russia it is managed by a committee of three—two elected members and one nominated expert.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to find any point for attack in this. But as soon as we come to consider the textile industry as a whole the matter is more complex. The exact amount of central control may vary from country to country, but in any case it will be very great. It is exercised by the Supreme Board of National Economy, acting through the local Boards. All these, no doubt, are controlled

<sup>1</sup> See G. D. H. Cole, *Self-Government in Industry and The World of Labour*, and M. B. Reckitt and C. Bechhofer, *The Meaning of National Guilds*. <sup>2</sup> Authority: George Lansbury.



by the trade unions. But that is not enough. The general control by the general body of trade unions does not give democracy in the mines or on the railways. This can only be got by giving the miners and railwaymen, under the community, the running of the mines and railways.

If the "centro-textile," "centro-sugar" and so on are thus democratically run, then this is the Russian form of Guild Socialism. If they are not, the more the pity. The workers' control is less direct and more hampered.

I have no information on this vital point, nor in any of the published books on Russia can I find it. One gains the impression that in some industries, such as textiles, this democracy exists; in others, such as transport, where the Russians stumbled upon a managing genius like Leonid Krassin, it does not. If that is so, we are perceiving a phenomenon similar to the perversion of the French Revolution. Just as the Allied attack forced militarism on revolutionary France, so the Allied blockade is forcing industrial autocracy on Russia.

But this is uncertain. One thing is clear—there are two competing organs of industrial democracy—two panaceas offered by rival firms. The Soviet has many advantages and is quite unattackable so far as regards local production and consumption. It, moreover, actually exists. The Guild is still an idea, yet it obviously is the only democratic form of government possible for large industry. The delimitation of the powers and spheres of action of the Guild and the Soviet is important. Upon their reconciliation depends the future of industrial democracy.

Meanwhile many Guild Socialists, or, as they prefer to be called, National Guildsmen, are as proud as Pooh Bah. In common with Mr Winston Churchill they have not recognised the Soviets.<sup>1</sup> They do not allow that any good can exist outside the columns of *The New Age*, and would not demean themselves by taking notice of an actual revolution. Similarly the Bolsheviks of Great Britain studiously ignore the Guild Socialist propaganda because it did not originate in working-class circles—an incredible imbecility, a theory which should prevent them ever reading Marx and Engels, or recognising the existence of the nobleman, Lenin, and the middle-class Jew, Trotsky.

<sup>1</sup> As I write this it is reported that the Left wing has started a revolt against this idiotic attitude, never really characteristic of any but the provincial branches.

### XIII

#### CONCLUSION

No book which professes, at any rate, to confine itself to description of matters of fact can have a conclusion without losing in some degree its dispassionate character. Therefore this "Conclusion" shall be written by another hand than the author's; it shall, moreover, only restate the conflict and come to no conclusion.

In a private letter to the author, a friend in a distant and unpleasant country—Australia—writes :

"I am less and less revolutionary. I increasingly opine that there are two fundamentally opposed philosophies, determined in the main by the philosopher's economic position.

"There is firstly the orthodox 'Hegelian' who says that on the whole history represents a steady progress. For have we not now got fine operas, fast and luxurious steamers, telegrams to inform us of (some of) the doings of the world, etc. ? . . . though of course there is much room for improvement and much regrettable cruelty, misery and evil. However this misery and evil is only the 'negative movement' ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν, to bring forth fresh progress.

"This view is extraordinarily widespread though proper only to those who enjoy or hope to enjoy said material signs of progress, and a few altruists who

enjoy at second hand. *N.B.*—The bone-head navvy thinks he enjoys them personally. This is because beer is cheap and brings oblivion and swift death. He is probably right, when his condition is compared with that of a Roman slave on the *latifundia*.

“This view at anyrate admits that there is *something* to conserve, though it may quite well be a reformist view.

“The second view would completely reject real progress and regard history merely as the record of successive enslavements. This I take it is Marxism. As far as I can see the two are ultimate and irreconcilable. They depend wholly upon personal experience and emotions, upon *πάθη*.

“Just now I am agnostic, though biassed towards No. 1. I hold No. 2 when either (a) X was in prison and whenever I let myself dwell upon the wrongs of labour, etc.—I don’t often do this, because indignation is such a two-edged sword; (b) when I myself have just been victimised or when owing to liver I am pessimistic about remaining comfortably in the bourgeoisie. However, I don’t know what is the relevance of this disgustingly cynical digression. . . .”

Probably that is all there is to be said. The Marxian and Bolshevik, speaking in terms of theory No. 2, would agree that it may be that the theory adopted by any given individual is adopted as a result of economic circumstances rather than as a result of a logical process. Mr G. K. Chesterton expresses much the same conclusion, in terms presumably of theory No. 1, when he says: “It may be beer is best.”

## ADDENDA

Page 29.—*A Communist friend, William Paul, writes to me taking exception to the statement that Marx believed in the absolute increase of working-class wretchedness (not in a decline of working-class conditions relatively to the upper classes). He says that Marx certainly only thought of a relative decline. Anyone can form his own opinion from the chapter in question ("Capital," vol. i., ch. xxv., sect. 4), but it is sufficient for my purpose that this "theory of increasing misery" has been widely taken for orthodox Marxism. See particularly the reports of the German Lübeck Conference (1901, in Ensor's "Modern Socialism"). My own opinion is that Marx did hold the theory of a tendency to the absolute decrease of the working-class standard of life, but also held that it was only a tendency, which could be checked by enactments of an eight-hour day, etc.*

Page 98.—*I am dealing here with the later form of Syndicalism, as it came over to England—the Pataud-Pouget and Sorel phase. Earlier Syndicalism, as represented by Griffuelhes and Lagardelle, is much nearer to Bolshevism and does not deserve the criticisms here launched against the later school. See L. Levine: "Syndicalism in France" (King, 7s. 6d.).*

Page 141.—*There is reason to believe that the constitution of the Supreme Board has now been changed to 69 members—30 from the Trade Unions, 10 from the Central Executive Committee of the All-*



*Russia Soviet Congress, 20 from the ten regional Boards, 7 from the Commissariats concerned with industry and 2 from the co-operatives. See the New York "Asia," Feb.-Mar., 1920.*

Page 146.—*Under certain circumstances the Oblast (regional) Congress may take the place of the Gubernia for elections to the All-Russia Congress. See the Constitution.*

## APPENDIX I

### NOTE TO P. 58

IT is perhaps worth while remarking that the suppression of already existing periodicals by revolutionaries at the moment of success is not to be considered as an attack upon the liberty of the Press. In England, for example, a successful revolution would almost certainly find it necessary to suppress, let us say, *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Express*, *The Evening News*. But this suppression would be just as defensible as any other revolutionary expropriation. Northcliffe's Press, Hulton's Press, Hearst's Press, and so on, are doomed, not because they purvey counter-revolution, distort the truth, etc., but because they are an ordinary profit-mongering capitalist enterprise. They satisfy, by capitalist methods, a human need—viz. news; that they provide adulterated goods and throw in objectionable propaganda is a side issue. The process of the concentration of capital, operating here as elsewhere, has made it impossible for anyone to enter into competition unless he is prepared to offer the same advertisement rates as Lord Northcliffe, pay the same circulation staff the same wages, keep the same editorial and business staffs, make the same initial sacrifice of capital, etc., etc. In other words, newspapers have become the preserve of the very wealthy. It is no insult to the existing Labour and Socialist news sheets to say that their news service

is bad and their circulation small: it is merely to note an inevitable fact. The old French system of "caution money" was described as muzzling the poor. *Silence aux pauvres!* Modern capital has achieved the same result by less clumsy means.

When, however, the dominion of capital is broken in this sphere, freedom of the Press, which does not exist now, becomes a possibility. Individuals—or, rather, since "one man, one paper" is impossible, parties—have a chance of making themselves heard. And it is to the possible obstruction of such parties that the remarks in Chapter V. apply.

A similar remark applies to freedom of meeting. The domination of capital in this sphere also, exemplified in the power to command all the suitable buildings and in the monopoly of leisure, must be broken before freedom of meeting begins to exist. It is also clear that during a revolution it is impossible to leave the bourgeoisie "freedom of meeting" to arrange, say, insurrection, assassination or sabotage, nor would the fact that a certain percentage of their followers were more foolish than malicious give them a right to be undisturbed. The Commune would hardly have permitted Thiers' soldiers to bivouac in the Place Vendôme under the plea of "freedom of meeting"; nor would the British Government have allowed a "free meeting" of German sailors at Sheerness during the war.

## APPENDIX II

### THE NEW COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

THIS is the "Manifesto of the First Congress of the Communist International, held at Moscow on March 2nd-6th 1919." It was issued on 10th March and signed by :

C. Rakovsky (Balkan Socialist Federation).

N. Lenin (Russian Communist Party).

G. Zinoviev               ,,               ,,

Leon Trotsky           ,,               ,,

Fritz Platten (Swiss Socialist Party)

—the Committee which drafted it.

For comments, etc., see Chapter VII. The texts of the Manifesto published vary considerably ; they seemed to have suffered from excision and in places from garbling. By a careful collation of various copies I hope that I have arrived at a text as nearly complete as may be.

Thirty-two delegates were at the Congress, representing the following countries :—Russia, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Bulgaria, Rumania, Finland, the Ukraine, Esthonia and Armenia. There were also present, without a vote or mandate, Socialists from the following countries : Switzerland, Holland, Czecho-Slovakia, Yugo-Slavia, France, Great Britain (B.S.P.), U.S.A. (S.L.P.), Turkey, Turkestan, Persia and Korea.

## TO THE PROLETARIAT OF ALL COUNTRIES !

Seventy-two years have gone by since the Communist Party proclaimed its programme in the form of the Manifesto written by the greatest teachers of the proletarian revolution, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Even at that early time, when Communism had scarcely come into the arena of conflict, it was pursued by the lies, hatred and calumny of the possessing classes, who rightly suspected in it their mortal enemy. During these seven decades Communism has travelled a hard road : of ascent followed by periods of sharp decline ; successes, but also severe defeats. In spite of all, the development at bottom went the way forecast by the Manifesto of the Communist Party. The epoch of the last decisive battle came later than the apostles of the social revolution expected and wished. But it has come.

We, Communists, representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the different countries of Europe, America and Asia, assembled in Soviet Moscow, feel and consider ourselves followers and fulfillers of the programme proclaimed seventy-two years ago. It is our task now to sum up the practical revolutionary experience of the working class, to cleanse the movement of its admixtures of opportunism and social patriotism, and to unite the forces of all the true revolutionary proletarian parties in order to further and hasten the complete victory of the Communist revolution.

1. Now that Europe is covered with burning ruins the most ruthless of the incendiaries are searching for someone to blame for the war, aided by their



professors, politicians, journalists, social patriots and other supporters of the bourgeoisie.

For a long span of years Socialism predicted the inevitability of the Imperialist war ; it perceived the essential cause of this war in the insatiable greed of the possessing classes in both camps of capitalist nations. Two years before the outbreak of the war, at the Congress of Basle, the responsible Socialist leaders of all countries branded Imperialism as the instigator of the coming war and menaced the bourgeoisie with the threat of the Socialist revolution—the retaliation of the proletariat for the crimes of militarism. Now, after the experience of five years, after history has disclosed the predatory lust of Germany, and has unmasked no less criminal deeds on the part of the Allies, the State Socialists of the Entente nations, together with their governments, are still continuing their revelations about the deposed German Kaiser. And the German social patriots, who in August, 1914, proclaimed the diplomatic White Book of the Hohenzollern as the holiest gospel of the people, to-day, in vulgar sycophancy, join with the Socialists of the Entente countries in accusing as the arch-criminal the deposed German monarch, whom they formerly served as slaves. In this way they hope to erase the memory of their own guilt and to gain the good-will of the victors. But alongside the dethroned dynasties of the Romanoffs, Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs, and the capitalist cliques of these lands, the rulers of France, England, Italy and the United States stand revealed in the light of unfolding event and diplomatic disclosures in their immeasurable vileness.

Up to the very outbreak of war British diplomacy

preserved a mysterious secrecy. Civil authorities were careful not to have it known that they intended to take part in the war on the side of the Entente, doubtless so as not to alarm the Berlin Government and put off the war. London wanted war; hence their action to make Berlin and Vienna build their hopes on English neutrality, while Paris and Petrograd were sure of England's intervention.

The war, which had been prepared for decades, broke out through direct and conscious provocation by Great Britain. The British Government reckoned on giving support to Russia and France until they were exhausted and at the same time had crushed Germany, their mortal enemy. But the strength of the German military machine proved too formidable and forced a real and not merely apparent intervention in the war by England. The military superiority of Germany also caused the Washington Government to give up its apparent neutrality. The United States assumed in regard to Europe the same part that England had played in former wars and has tried to play in the last—*i.e.* the plan of weakening one side by the help of the other by joining in military operations with the sole aim of securing for themselves all the advantages of the situation. Wilson's stake, on the American tombola method, was not high, but it was the last, and he won.

The contradictions of the capitalist system were converted by the war into degrading torments of hunger and cold, epidemics, and moral savagery, for all mankind. Thereby the academic quarrel among Socialists over the theory of increasing misery, and also of the undermining of capitalism through Socialism, is now finally determined. Statisticians

and teachers of the theory of reconciliation of these contradictions have endeavoured for decades to gather together from all countries of the earth real and apparent facts to prove the increasing well-being of the working class.

But we are faced to-day with the harrowing reality of impoverishment, which is no longer merely a social problem, but a physiological and biological one. This catastrophe of an Imperialist war has with one sweep swept away all the gains of experts and of parliamentary struggles. It has also come into being from the inner tendencies of capitalism as well as from the economic bargains and political compromises now engulfed in a sea of blood.

Finance-capital, which flung mankind into the abyss of war, has itself suffered catastrophic changes during the course of the war. The dependence of paper money upon the material basis of production has been completely destroyed. More and more losing its significance as the medium and regulator of capitalist commodity circulation, paper money becomes merely a means of exploitation, robbery, of military-economic oppression. The complete deterioration of paper money now reflects the general deadly crisis of capitalist commodity exchange.

As free competition was replaced as regulator of production and distribution in the chief domains of economics, during the decades which preceded the war, by the system of trusts and monopolies, so the exigencies of the war took the regulating rôle out of the hands of the monopolies and gave it directly to the military power. Distribution of raw materials, utilisation of petroleum from Baku or Rumania, of coal from the Donets, of cereals from the Ukraine,

the fate of German locomotives, railroad cars and automobiles, the provisioning of famine-stricken Europe with bread and meat—all these basic questions of the economic life of the world are no longer regulated by free competition, nor yet by combinations of national and international trusts, but through direct application of military force.

Just as the complete subordination of the power of the State to the purposes of finance-capital led mankind to the Imperialist shambles, so finance-capital has, through this mass slaughter, completely militarised, not the State alone, but itself also. It can no longer fulfil its essential economic functions otherwise than by means of blood and iron.

The opportunists who before the war exhorted the workers, on the pretext of a gradual transition into Socialism, to be temperate, who, during the war, asked for submission in the name of "civil peace" and defence of the Fatherland, now again demand of the workers self-abnegation to overcome the terrible consequences of the war. If this preaching were listened to by the workers, capitalism would build out of the bones of several generations a new and still more formidable structure, leading to a new and inevitable world war. Fortunately for humanity this is no longer possible.

The absorption by the State of economic life, so vigorously opposed by capitalist Liberalism, has now become a fact. There can be no return either to free competition or to the rule of the trusts, syndicates and other economic monsters. The only question is, what shall be the future mainstay of State production, the Imperialist state or the state of the victorious proletariat? In other words, shall



the whole of working humanity become the feudal bond-servants of the victorious Entente bourgeoisie, which under the name of a League of Nations, aided by an "international" army and an "international" navy, here plunders and murders, there throws a crumb, but everywhere enchains the proletariat, with the single aim of maintaining its own rule? Or will the working class take into its own hands the disorganised and shattered economic life and make certain its reconstruction on a Socialist basis?

Only the Proletarian Dictatorship, which recognises neither inherited privileges nor rights of property, but which arises from the needs of the hungry masses, can shorten the period of the present crisis; and for this purpose it will mobilise all materials and forces, introduce the universal duty to labour, establish the regime of industrial discipline and in this way heal in the course of a few years the open wounds caused by the war, and also raise humanity to now undreamt-of heights.

2. The national State, which was given a tremendous impulse by capitalist evolution, has become too narrow for the development of the productive forces. This is making more and more untenable the position of the small states, adjacent to the great powers of Europe and in other parts of the world. These small states came into existence at different times as fragments split off the bigger states, as petty currency in payment for services rendered, to serve as strategic, buffer states. They, too, have their ruling gangs, their Imperialist pretensions, their diplomatic machinations. Their illusory independence had until the war precisely the same support as the European balance of power—namely, the continuous



opposition between the two Imperialist camps. The war has destroyed this balance. The tremendous preponderance of power which the war gave to Germany in the beginning compelled these smaller nations to seek their welfare and safety under the wings of German militarism. After Germany was beaten the bourgeoisie of the small nations, together with their "patriotic" Socialists, turned to the victorious Imperialism of the Allies and began to seek assurance for their further independent existence in the hypocritical "points" of the Wilson programme. At the same time the number of little states has increased. Out of the unity of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, out of the different parts of the Tsarist Empire, new sovereignties have formed themselves. And these, as soon as born, jump at each other's throats on account of their frontier disputes. Meanwhile the Allied Imperialists brought about certain combinations of new and old small states through the cement of mutual hatreds and general weakness. Even while violating the small and weak peoples, and delivering them to famine and degradation, the Entente Imperialists, exactly as the Imperialists of the Central Powers before them, did not cease to talk of the right of self-determination of all peoples, a right which is now entirely destroyed in Europe and in the rest of the world.

Only the proletarian revolution can secure the existence of the small nations, a revolution which frees the productive forces of all countries from the restrictions of the national States, which unites all peoples in the closest economic co-operation on the basis of a universal economic<sup>5</sup> plan, and makes the smallest and weakest peoples able freely and inde-

pendently to carry on their national culture without detriment to the united and centralised economy of Europe and of the whole world.

3. The last war, after all a war to gain colonies, was at the same time a war with the aid of the colonies. To an unprecedented extent the population of the colonies was drawn into the European War. Indians, Arabs, Madagascans battled on the European continent. What for? For the right to remain slaves of England or France? Never did capitalist rule show itself more shameless, never was the truth of colonial slavery brought into such sharp relief. As a consequence we witnessed a series of open rebellions and revolutionary ferment in all colonies. In Europe itself it was Ireland that reminded us in bloody street battles that it is still an enslaved country and feels itself as such. In Madagascar, in Annam and in other countries the troops of the bourgeois Republic have had more than one insurrection of the colonial slaves to suppress during the war. In India the revolutionary movement has not been at a standstill for one day, and lately we have witnessed in Bombay the greatest labour strike in Asia, to which the Government of Great Britain answered with armoured cars.

In this manner the colonial question in its entirety became the order of the day, not alone on the green table of the diplomatic conferences at Paris, but also in the colonies themselves. The Wilson programme, at the very best, calls only for a change in the firm name of colonial enslavement. Liberation of the colonies can come only through the liberation of the working class of the oppressing nations. The workers and peasants, not only of Annam, Algeria,

Bengal, but also of Persia and Armenia, can gain independent existence only after the workers of England and France have overthrown Lloyd George and Clemenceau and taken the power into their own hands. Even now in the more advanced colonies the battle goes on, not only under the flag of national liberation, but it assumes also an open and outspoken social character. Capitalist Europe has drawn the backward countries by force into the capitalist whirlpool, and Socialist Europe will come to the aid of the liberated colonies with its technique, its organisation, its spiritual influence, in order to facilitate their transition into the orderly system of Socialist economy.

Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia ! The hour of Proletarian Dictatorship in Europe will also be the hour of your liberation !

4. The whole bourgeois world accuses the Communists of destroying liberty and political democracy. That is not true. Having come into power, the proletariat only asserts the absolute impossibility of using the methods of bourgeois democracy and creates the conditions and forms of a higher working-class democracy. The whole course of capitalist development undermined political democracy, not only by dividing the nation into two irreconcilable classes, but also by condemning the numerous petty bourgeois and semi-proletarian elements, as well as the slum-proletariat, to permanent economic stagnation and political impotence.

In those countries in which the historical development has furnished the opportunity, the working class has utilised the regime of political democracy for its organisation against capitalism. In all

countries where the conditions for a workers' revolution are not yet ripe, the same process will go on. But the great middle layers on the farms, as well as in the cities, are hindered by capitalism in their historic development and remain stagnant for whole epochs. The peasant of Bavaria and Baden who does not look beyond his church spire, the small French wine-grower who has been ruined by the adulterations practised by the big capitalists, the small farmer of America plundered and betrayed by bankers and legislators—all these social ranks which have been thrust aside from the main road of development by capitalism are called on paper by the regime of political democracy to the administration of the State. In reality, however, the finance-oligarchy decides all important questions which determine the destinies of nations behind the back of parliamentary democracy. Particularly was this true of the war question. The same applies to the question of peace now.

If the finance-oligarchy considers it advantageous to veil its deeds of violence behind parliamentary votes, then the bourgeois State has at its command, in order to gain its ends, all the traditions and attainments of former centuries of upper-class rule multiplied by the wonders of capitalist technique: lies, demagogism, prosecution, slander, bribery, calumny and terror. To demand of the proletariat in the final life-and-death struggle with capitalism that it should obey lamblike the precepts of bourgeois democracy would be the same as to ask a man who is defending his life against robbers to follow the artificial rules of a French duel that have been set by his enemy but not followed by him.



In a realm of destruction, where not only the means of production and transportation, but also the institutions of political democracy, are scattered and bleeding, the proletariat must create its own forms, to serve above all as a bond of unity for the working class and to enable it to accomplish a revolutionary intervention in the further development of mankind. Such apparatus is provided by the WORKERS' SOVIETS. The old parties, the old unions have proved incapable, in person of their leaders, to understand, much less to carry out, the task which the new epoch presents to them. The proletariat created a new institution which embraces the entire working class, without distinction of vocation or political maturity, an elastic form of organisation capable of continually renewing itself, expanding, and of drawing into itself ever new elements, ready to open its doors to the working groups of city and village which are near to the proletariat. This indispensable autonomous organisation of the working class in the present struggle and in the future conquests of different lands tests the proletariat and represents the greatest inspiration and the mightiest weapon of the proletariat of our time.

5. Wherever the masses are awakened to consciousness, Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Councils (Soviets) will be formed. To fortify these Soviets, to increase their authority, to oppose them to the State apparatus of the bourgeoisie, is now the chief task of the class-conscious and honest workers of all countries. By means of these Soviets the working class can counteract the disorganisation which has been brought into it by the infernal anguish of the war, by hunger, by the violent deeds of the possessing



classes and by the betrayal of their former leaders. By means of these Soviets the working class will gain power in all countries most readily and most certainly when these Soviets gain the support of the majority of the labouring population. By means of these Soviets the working class once attaining power will control all the field of economic and cultural life, as in Soviet Russia.

The collapse of the Imperialist state, in all forms, from Tsarist to extreme democracy, goes on simultaneously with the collapse of the Imperialistic military system. The armies of millions, mobilised by Imperialism, could remain steadfast only so long as the proletariat remained obedient under the yoke of the bourgeoisie. The complete breakdown of national unity signifies also an inevitable disintegration of the army. Thus it happened, first in Russia, then in Austro-Hungary, then in Germany. The same also is to be expected in other Imperialist states. Insurrection of the peasant against the landowner, of the labourer against the capitalist, of both against the monarchic, or "democratic" bureaucracy, must lead inevitably to the insurrection of soldiers against their commander and, furthermore, to a sharp division between the proletarian and bourgeois elements within the army. The Imperialist war which pitted nation against nation has passed and is passing into the civil war which lines up class against class.

The outcry of the bourgeois world against civil war and the Red Terror is the most colossal hypocrisy of which the history of political struggles can boast. There would be no civil war if the exploiters who have carried mankind to the brink of ruin had not

prevented every forward step of the labouring masses, if they had not instigated plots and murders and called to their aid armed help from outside to maintain or restore their predatory privileges. Civil war is forced upon the labouring classes by their arch-enemies. The working class must answer blow for blow, if it will not renounce its own object and its own future, which is at the same time the future of all humanity.

The Communist parties, far from conjuring up civil war artificially, rather strive to shorten its duration as much as possible—in case it has become an iron necessity—to minimise the number of its victims and, above all, to secure victory for the proletariat. This makes necessary the disarming of the bourgeoisie at the proper time, the arming of the labourer and the formation of a Communist army as a protector of the rule of the proletariat and the inviolability of the social structure. Such is the red army of Soviet Russia, which arose to protect the achievements of the working class against every assault from within or without. The Soviet army is inseparable from the Soviet state.

6. Conscious of the world historic character of their mission, the enlightened workers strove from the very beginning of the organised Socialist movement for an international union. The foundation stone of this union was laid in the year 1864 in London, in the first International. The Franco-Prussian War, from which arose the Germany of the Hohenzollerns, undermined the First International, giving rise at the same time to national Labour parties. As early as 1889 these parties united at the Congress of Paris and organised a Second International. But during this period the centre of

gravity of the Labour movement rested entirely on national ground, confining itself within the realm of national parliamentarism, to the narrow compass of the national state and national industries. Decades of organising and labour reformism created a generation of leaders, most of whom gave verbal recognition to the programme of social revolution but denied it in substance. They were lost in the swamp of reformism and adaptation to the bourgeois state. The opportunist character of the leading parties of the Second International was finally revealed—and led to the greatest collapse of the movement in all its history—when events required revolutionary methods of warfare from the Labour parties. Just as the war of 1870 dealt a death-blow to the First International by revealing that there was not, in fact, behind the social-revolutionary programme any compact power of the masses, so the war of 1914 killed the Second International by showing that above the consolidated Labour masses there stood Labour parties which converted themselves into servile organs of the bourgeois state.

This includes not only the social patriots who are to-day openly in the camp of the bourgeoisie as confidential advisers and reliable hangmen of the working class, but also the hazy, fickle and irresolute Socialist centre which is to-day trying to revive the Second International—*i.e.* the narrowness, opportunism and revolutionary impotence of their predecessors. The Independents of Germany, the present majority of the Socialist Party in France, the Menshevik group in Russia, the Independent Labour Party in England and similar groups are actually trying to re-establish themselves in the

position which the old official parties of the Second International held before the war. They appear as before with proposals of compromise and conciliation and thereby paralyse the energy of the proletariat, lengthening the period of crisis and consequently increasing the misery of Europe. War against the Socialist Centre is a necessary condition of successful war against Imperialism.

Spurning the half-heartedness, hypocrisy and corruption of the decadent official Socialist parties, we, the Communists assembled in the Third International, feel ourselves to be the direct successors of the heroic efforts and martyrdom of a long series of revolutionary generations from Babeuf to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg. As the First International foresaw the future development and pointed the way, as the Second International gathered together and organised millions of the proletarians, so the Third International is the International of open mass action, of the revolutionary realisation, the INTERNATIONAL OF DEEDS. Socialist criticism has sufficiently stigmatised the bourgeois world order. The task of the International Communist Party is now to overthrow this order and to erect in its place the structure of the Socialist world order. We urge the working men and women of all countries to unite under the Communist banner, the emblem under which the first great victories have already been won.

Proletarians of all countries ! In the war against Imperialist barbarity, against monarchy, against the privileged classes, the bourgeois state and bourgeois property, against all forms and varieties of social and national oppression—UNITE !



Under the standard of the Workmen's Councils, under the banner of the Third International, in the revolutionary struggle for power and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, proletarians of all countries—unite !

### PROGRAMME

The new era has begun ! The era of the downfall of Capitalism—its internal disintegration. The epoch of the proletarian Communist revolution. In some countries, victorious proletarian revolution ; increasing revolutionary ferment in other lands ; uprisings in the colonies ; utter incapacity of the ruling classes to control the fate of peoples any longer—that is the picture of world conditions to-day.

Humanity, whose whole culture now lies in ruins, faces the danger of complete destruction. There is only one power which can save it—the power of the proletariat. The old capitalist “order” can exist no longer. The ultimate result of the capitalist mode of production is chaos—a chaos to be overcome only by the great producing class, the proletariat. It is the proletariat which must establish real order, the order of Communism. It must end the domination of capital, make war impossible, wipe out state boundaries, transform the whole world into one co-operative commonwealth and bring about real human brotherhood and freedom.

World Capitalism is preparing itself for the final battle. Under cover of the “League of Nations” and a deluge of pacifist phrase-mongering a desperate effort is being made to pull together the tumbling capitalist system and to direct its forces against



the constantly growing proletarian revolt. This monstrous new conspiracy of the capitalist class must be met by the proletariat by seizure of the political power of the State, turning this power against its class enemies and using it as a lever to set in motion the economic revolution. The final victory of the proletariat of the world means the beginning of the real history of free mankind.

### *The Conquest of Political Power*

Seizure of political power by the proletariat means destruction of the political power of the bourgeoisie. The organised power of the bourgeoisie is in the civil State, with its capitalist army under control of bourgeois-junker officers, its police and gendarmes, jailers and judges, its priests, government officials, etc. Conquest of the political power means, not merely a change in the personnel of ministries, but annihilation of the enemy's machinery of government: disarmament of the bourgeoisie, of the counter-revolutionary officers, of the White Guard; arming of the proletariat, the revolutionary soldiers, the Red Guard of working men; displacement of all bourgeois judges and organisation of all proletarian courts; elimination of control by reactionary government officials and substitution of new organs of management of the proletariat. The victory of the proletariat consists in shattering the enemy's organisation and organising the proletarian power; in the destruction of the bourgeois and upbuilding of the proletarian State machinery. Not until the proletariat has achieved this victory and broken the resistance of the bourgeoisie can the former enemies of

the new order be made useful, by bringing them into accord with its work.

### *Democracy and Dictatorship*

The proletarian State, like every State, is an organ of suppression, but it arrays itself against the opposition of the despoilers of labour, who are using every means in a desperate effort to stifle the revolution in blood and to make impossible further opposition. The dictatorship of the proletariat, which gives it a favoured position in the community, is only a provisional institution. As the opposition of the bourgeoisie is broken, as it is expropriated and gradually absorbed into the working groups, the proletarian dictatorship disappears, until finally the State dies and there are no more class distinctions.

Democracy so-called—that is, bourgeois democracy—is nothing more nor less than veiled dictatorship by the bourgeoisie. The much-vaunted “popular will” exists as little as a unified people. In reality there are the classes, with antagonistic, irreconcilable purposes. However, since the bourgeoisie is only a small minority, it needs this fiction of the “popular will” as a flourish of fine-sounding words to reinforce its rule over the working classes and to impose its own class will upon the people. The proletariat, on the contrary, as the overwhelming majority of the people, openly exercises its class power by means of its mass organisation and through its Soviets, in order to wipe out the privileges of the bourgeoisie and to secure the transition, rather the transformation, into a CLASSLESS Communist Commonwealth.

The main emphasis of bourgeois democracy is on formal declaration of rights and liberties which are actually unattainable by the proletariat, because of want of the material means for their enjoyment ; while the bourgeoisie uses its material advantages, through its Press and organisations, to deceive and betray the people. On the other hand, the Soviet type of Government makes it possible for the proletariat to realise its rights and liberties. The Soviet power gives to the people palaces, houses, printing offices, paper supply, etc., for their Press, their societies and meetings. And in this way alone is actual proletarian democracy made possible.

Bourgeois democracy, with its parliamentary system, uses words to induce belief in popular participation in government. Actually the masses and their organisations are held far out of reach of the real power and the real State administration. In the Soviet system the mass organisations rule, and through them the mass itself, inasmuch as the Soviets draw constantly increasing numbers of workers into the State administration, and only by this process will the entire working population gradually become part of the government. The Soviet system also builds itself directly on the mass organisations of the proletariat, on the Soviets themselves, the revolutionary trade unions, the co-operatives, etc. Bourgeois democracy and its parliamentary system sharpen the separation of the masses from the State by division of the governments into legislative and executive powers and through parliamentary mandates beyond popular recall. The Soviet system, by contrast, unites the masses with the organs of government by right of recall, amalgamation of

legislature and executive powers and by use of working Boards. Above all, this union is fostered by the fact that in the Soviet system elections are based not on arbitrary territorial districts, but on units of production.

In this way the Soviet system brings true proletarian democracy, democracy by and for the proletarians against the bourgeoisie. The industrial proletariat is favoured in this system because it is the most aggressive, best organised and politically ripest class under whose leadership the semi-proletarians and small farmers will be gradually elevated. These temporary privileges of the industrial proletariat must be utilised to draw the small farmers away from the control of the big landowners and bourgeoisie and to organise and train them as helpers in the building of the Communist structure.

### *Expropriation of the Bourgeoisie and Socialisation of Production*

The breakdown of the capitalist order and the disruption of capitalistic industrial discipline makes impossible the reorganisation of production on a capitalist basis. Wage wars of the working men—even when successful—do not bring the anticipated betterment of conditions of living; the workers can only become emancipated when production is no longer controlled by the bourgeoisie, but by the proletariat. In order to raise the standards of productivity, in order to crush the opposition on the part of the bourgeoisie (which only prolongs the death struggle of the old regime and thereby invites danger of total ruin), the Proletarian Dictatorship must



carry out the expropriation of the greater bourgeoisie and junkerdom and convert the means of production and distribution into the common property of the proletarian state.

Communism is now being born out of the ruins of capitalism—there is no other salvation for humanity. The opportunists who are making Utopian demands for the reconstruction of the economic system of capitalism, so as to postpone socialisation, only delay the process of disintegration and increase the danger of total demolition. The Communist revolution, on the other hand, is the best and only means by which the most important social power of production—the proletariat—can be saved, and with it society itself.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat does not in any way call for partition of the means of production and exchange ; rather, on the contrary, its aim is further to centralise the forces of production and to subject all production to a systematic plan. As the first steps—socialisation of the great banks which now control production ; the taking over by the power of the proletariat of all Government-controlled economic utilities ; the transferring of all communal enterprises ; the socialising of the syndicated and trustified units of production, as well as all other branches of production in which the degree of concentration and centralisation of capital makes this technically practicable ; the socialising of agricultural estates and their conversion into co-operative establishments.

As far as the smaller enterprises are concerned, the proletariat must gradually unite them, according to the degree of their importance. It must be particularly emphasised that small properties will in no way be expropriated and that property owners who are



not exploiters of labour will not be forcibly dispossessed. This element will gradually be drawn into the Socialist organisation through the force of example, through practical demonstration of the superiority of the new order of things, and the regulation by which the small farmers and the petty bourgeoisie of the cities will be freed from economic bondage to usurious capital and landlordism, and from tax burdens (especially by annulment of the national debts), etc.

The task of the Proletarian Dictatorship in the economic field can only be fulfilled to the extent that the proletariat is enabled to create centralised organs of management and to institute workers' control. To this end it must make use of its mass organisations which are in closest relation to the process of production. In the field of distribution the Proletarian Dictatorship must re-establish commerce by an accurate distribution of products, to which end the following methods are to be considered:—the socialisation of wholesale establishments; the taking over of all bourgeois State and municipal apparatus of distribution; control of the great co-operative societies, which organisations will still have an important rôle in the production epoch; the gradual centralisation of all these organisations and their conversion into a systematic unity for the rational distribution of products.

As in the field of production so also in the field of distribution all qualified technicians and specialists are to be made use of, provided that their political resistance is broken and they are still capable of adapting themselves, not to the service of capital but to the new system of production. Far from

oppressing them, the proletariat will make it possible for the first time for them to develop intensive creative work. The Proletarian Dictatorship, with their co-operation, will reverse the separation of physical and mental work which capitalism has developed, and thus will Science and Labour be unified. Besides expropriating the factories, mines, estates, etc., the proletariat must also abolish the exploitation of the people by capitalist landlords, transfer the large mansions to the local workers' Soviets and move the working people into the bourgeois dwellings.

During this great transition period the power of the Soviets must constantly build up the entire administrative organisation into a more centralised structure, but, on the other hand, constantly draw ever-increasing elements of the working people into the immediate control of Government.

### *The Way of Victory*

The revolutionary era compels the proletariat to make use of the means of battle which will concentrate its entire energies—namely, mass action, with its logical resultant, direct conflict with the governmental machinery in open combat. All other methods, such as revolutionary use of bourgeois parliamentarism, will be of only secondary significance.

The indispensable condition for successful struggle is separation, not only from the direct servitors of capitalism and enemies of the Communist revolution, amongst whom are the Social Democrats of the Right, but also from the parties of the Centre, who

desert the proletariat at the critical moment in order to come to terms with its open antagonists. On the other hand, there are essential elements of the proletariat, heretofore not within the Socialist Party, who stand now completely and absolutely on the platform of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in the form of Soviet rule, for example, the corresponding elements among the Syndicalists.

The growth of the revolutionary movement in all lands, the danger of suppression of this revolution through the coalition of capitalistic states, the attempts of the Socialist betrayers to unite with one another and to give their services to the Wilsonian League, finally, the absolute necessity for co-ordination of proletarian action—all these demand the formation of a real revolutionary and real proletarian Communist International. This International, which subordinates the so-called national interests to the interests of the international revolution, will personify the mutual help of the proletariat of the different countries, for without economic and other mutual helpfulness the proletariat will not be able to organise the new society. On the other hand, in contrast with the Yellow International of the social patriots, the Proletarian Communist International will support the plundered colonial peoples in their fight against Imperialism, in order to hasten the final collapse of the Imperialistic world system.

The capitalist criminals asserted at the beginning of the World War that it was only in defence of the common Fatherland. But soon German Imperialism revealed its real brigand character by its bloody deeds in Russia, in the Ukraine and Finland. Now the Entente states unmask themselves as world

despoilers and murderers of the proletariat. Together with the German bourgeoisie and social patriots, with hypocritical phrases about peace on their lips, they are trying to throttle the revolution of the European proletariat by means of their war machinery and stupid barbaric colonial soldiery. Indescribable is the White Terror of the bourgeois cannibals. Incalculable are the sacrifices of the working class. Their best—Liebknecht, Rosa Luxembourgl—they have lost. Against this the proletariat must defend itself, defend at any price. The Communist International calls the whole world proletariat to this final struggle.

DOWN WITH THE IMPERIALIST CONSPIRACY OF CAPITAL !

LONG LIVE THE INTERNATIONAL REPUBLIC OF THE WORKERS' SOVIETS !

## APPENDIX III

N. LENIN : THESES PRESENTED TO THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AT MOSCOW, 6TH MARCH 1919

[It will be observed that the programme given above differs materially from Lenin's Theses. The copyright of the translation here given is the property of the Workers' Socialist Federation, to which I am indebted for permission to reprint.]

1. The growth of the revolutionary movement amongst the working classes of all countries has resulted in frantic efforts on the part of the bourgeoisie and its agents in working-class organisations, to find ideo-political arguments in defence of the dominion of the exploiters. A favourite argument takes the form of the condemnation of dictatorship and the defence of democracy. The deceitfulness and hypocrisy of such an argument, repeated in a thousand ways by the capitalist Press, and re-echoed at the Berne Conference of February, 1919, must be plain to all who refuse to betray the fundamental principles of Socialism.

2. This argument plays with the ideas of "democracy generally" and "dictatorship generally," without reference to the question of class. This non-class, supra-class and general formulation of the question constitutes nothing else but a direct insult to the basic principle of Socialism—namely, that doctrine of the class war which, though recognised verbally,



is virtually forgotten in practice by those Socialists who have gone over to the bourgeois camp. In no capitalist country of to-day does there exist a "general democracy," but only a bourgeois democracy; and there is no question of a "general dictatorship," but only of a dictatorship of the oppressed class—that is, the proletariat—over the oppressors and exploiters—that is, the bourgeoisie—with the object of overcoming the resistance offered by the exploiters in the defence of their rule.

3. History teaches us that no oppressed class has ever yet come into power, or could ever do so, without going through a period of dictatorship—*i.e.* the conquest of political power and the forcible suppression of the most desperate, most furious, most reckless resistance always offered by the exploiters. The bourgeoisie, whose rule is now championed by those Socialists who are opposed to dictatorship, and are ready to die on behalf of "democracy generally," acquired power, in all the foremost countries, by a series of rebellions and civil wars, by violent suppression of absolute monarchy, of the feudal system, of slave-owners, and of their attempts at restoration. Time and again the Socialists of every country have in their books, pamphlets, resolutions at congresses and speeches demonstrated to the people the class character of these bourgeois revolutions. Thus the defence of bourgeois democracy, under the cloak of speeches about "Democracy generally," and the outcry against the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the cloak of wailing about "dictatorship generally," are a direct act of treachery against Socialism, a desertion, in effect, to the bourgeois camp, a denial of the proletariat's right to its own proletarian

revolution, and a defence of bourgeois reformism, coming at the very moment when bourgeois reformism has collapsed throughout the world, and when the war has created a revolutionary situation.

4. By pointing out the class character of bourgeois civilisation, democracy and parliamentarism, Socialists were expressing the idea explained with the greatest scientific accuracy by Marx and Engels, when they said that the democratic bourgeois Republic was nothing but an apparatus for the oppression of the working class by the bourgeois class, of the working masses by a handful of capitalists. Amongst those who now raise their voices against dictatorship and in defence of democracy, there is not a single revolutionary nor a single Marxist who has not solemnly sworn to the workers that he had recognised that fundamental truth. But now, when the revolutionary proletariat is beginning to move, with the object of destroying this apparatus of oppression and of introducing a dictatorship of the proletariat, these traitors to Socialism try to make out that the bourgeoisie has presented the toilers with "pure democracy," has renounced resistance, and is willing to yield to a majority of the workers, just as if the democratic Republic possessed no State apparatus for the oppression of labour by capital.

5. The Paris Commune, extolled in words by all who wish to be considered Socialists—since they know that the workers warmly and sincerely sympathise with it—has very clearly proved the historical limitations and limited worth of bourgeois parliamentarism and democracy, which, although very free institutions in comparison with those of the Middle Ages, must, in these times of proletarian

revolution, be subjected to absolutely necessary and fundamental changes. Marx, who best of all interpreted the historical meaning of the Commune, has proved in his analysis the extortionist character of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism, under which, once in the course of several years, the oppressed classes are allowed the right to decide what member of the propertied classes shall "represent and crush" (*ver und zertreten*) the people in Parliament. And now, when the Soviet movement throughout the world is openly continuing the work of the Commune, these traitors to Socialism forget the concrete experiences and concrete lessons of the Paris Commune, and repeat the old middle-class rubbish about "democracy generally." They forget that the Commune was a non-parliamentary institution.

6. The importance of the Commune, further, consists in the effort to break up and destroy the capitalist State machinery of bureaucracy, courts of justice, military and police apparatus, and to replace it by a self-governing mass organisation of workmen, making no distinction between legislative and executive powers. All bourgeois democratic republics of today, including the German, which the traitors to Socialism falsely assert to be proletarian, retain this bourgeois State apparatus. This is again a clear and distinct proof that the defence of "democracy" is only another name for the defence of the bourgeoisie and its extortionist privileges.

7. "Freedom of meeting" may be cited as an example of what is demanded by "democracy pure and simple." Every class-conscious workman who has not broken away from his class understands at

once that it would be absurd to grant full liberty to hold meetings to the exploiters during the period when those exploiters are resisting their overthrow and defending their privileges. Neither in England in 1649, nor in France in 1793, did the bourgeoisie, in its revolutionary phase, grant liberty to hold meetings to the monarchists and aristocracy, when the latter called in foreign troops and "held meetings" to organise attempts at restoration. And if the bourgeoisie to-day, having long since become reactionary, demands guarantees in advance from the proletariat to be free to hold meetings, irrespective of what resistance the capitalists may offer against expropriation, the workers will only laugh at the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, the workers know full well that even in the most democratic bourgeois republics "freedom of meeting" is an empty phrase, for not only do the rich enjoy the protection of a powerful State apparatus, but they can also command the best public and private buildings and have more leisure at their disposal. Town and country proletarians, as well as the smaller peasants, have none of these advantages. As long as these conditions continue, "equality"—*i.e.* "democracy pure and simple"—is a delusion. In order to win real equality and to realise democracy for the workers in practice, the capitalists must first be deprived of all their public and grand private buildings, the workers must be given leisure, and their freedom to meet, should be defended by armed workmen, and not by "the aristocracy," or by capitalist officers in command of brutalised soldiers.

It is only after such changes have been effected



that it will be possible, without insulting the workers, the toilers, the poor, to talk about liberty to hold meetings about equality. And there is no one to effect these changes but the advance-guard of the toilers—the proletariat—the conqueror of the capitalist exploiters.

8. "Liberty of the Press" is also a much-used catch-word of "democracy pure and simple." But once again the workers know, and Socialists in every country have often acknowledged, that this liberty, too, is a delusion as long as the best printing offices and the largest stocks of paper remain in the hands of the capitalists, and as long as capital retains its power over the Press, a power which is always more pronounced, more striking, more cynical, wherever democracy and the republican regime are most highly developed, as, for instance, in America. Here, again, in order to secure real equality and real democracy for the working masses, the capitalists must be deprived of the power to employ writers in their service, to buy up publishing businesses and to bribe newspapers. With this aim in view the yoke of capitalism must be shaken off, the extortioners overthrown and their resistance crushed. The capitalists have always understood "liberty" to mean liberty for the rich to make profits, and liberty for the workers to die of starvation; by "Liberty of the Press" they mean liberty for the rich to bribe the Press and to fabricate and inspire so-called public opinion. The defenders of "democracy pure and simple" again reveal themselves in practice as defenders of the lowest and most mercenary system employed by the rich, to control the masses' source of enlightenment; they reveal themselves as de-



luders of the people, distracting them, by high-sounding and lying phrases, from the carrying out of their historic task of delivering the Press from the hands of capital. Real liberty and equality must be established by Communism, under which there will be no possibility of profiting at the expense of others, no possibility of either directly or indirectly subjecting the Press to the power of money, and where nothing will prevent the workers, individually or in groups, from enjoying and realising in practice equal rights of using the printing offices and stocks of paper belonging to the Community.

9. The history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had revealed to us even before the war the true meaning of this famous "democracy pure and simple" under capitalism. Marxists have always maintained that the more developed, the more "pure and simple" democracy is, the more open, the fiercer, the more merciless is the class war, and the more "pure and simple" is the pressure of capital and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The Dreyfus affair in republican France; the sanguinary attacks on strikers by soldiers, supplied with arms for the purpose from capitalist sources, in the free and democratic republic of America—these and thousands of similar instances reveal the truth, which the bourgeoisie tries in vain to conceal, that even in the most democratic republics there reigns in practice the terrorism and dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, showing itself quite openly each time the extortioners imagine that the power of capital is beginning to totter.

10. The Imperialist war of 1914-1918 has, once and for all, disclosed to the most backward of workers

the true nature of bourgeois democracy, revealing it as nothing less than a capitalist dictatorship, even in the freest republics. In order that a German or an English group of millionaires might be enriched, millions of men have been murdered, and the military dictatorship of the capitalist class has been established in the freest republics. Even after the defeat of Germany this dictatorship is still kept up in the Entente countries. More than anything else the war has served to open the eyes of the workers, has stripped bourgeois democracy of its sham ornaments and revealed to all the nations vast abysses of greed and speculation during the war and because of it. The bourgeoisie carried on the war in the name of liberty and equality, and in that same name military contractors have amassed untold riches. No effort on the part of the yellow Berne International will be able to conceal from the masses the plundering character, now definitely unmasked, of bourgeois "liberty," bourgeois "equality" and bourgeois "democracy."

11. In Germany, which, in a capitalistic sense, is the most highly developed country in Europe, the first months of republican liberty, brought by the destruction of Imperial Germany, showed the German working man and the whole world which class is actually dominant in the bourgeois democratic republic. The murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg was an event of world-historic significance, not only because the best and leading personalities of the real proletarian Communistic International were tragically done to death, but also because the foremost European—one might say without exaggeration the foremost world state—has

revealed its class foundations to the very roots. If persons under arrest—that is, persons under the protection of the State—can be murdered with impunity by officers and capitalists under a government of social patriots, then it follows the democratic republic under which such things can happen is, in effect, a bourgeois dictatorship. People who give vent to their indignation at the murders of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg, but who have not grasped this truth, merely display either their own stupidity or their own hypocrisy. In one of the freest and most advanced republics in the world, in the German Republic, “freedom” consists in the liberty to kill with impunity the arrested leaders of the proletariat. It will never be otherwise as long as capitalism is dominant, since the development of democracy does not weaken the class struggle, but, on the contrary, aggravates it, until, as the result of the war and its sequels, it has now reached boiling-point.

Throughout the whole civilised world the deportation, persecution and internment of Bolsheviki is taking place, as, for instance, in Switzerland, one of the freest bourgeois republics. In America, too, there are even Bolshevik pogroms. From the standpoint of “democracy pure and simple,” it is simply ludicrous that civilised, advanced, democratic countries, armed to the teeth, should dread the presence of some few dozens of individuals from backward, starving, ruined Russia, which has been called savage and criminal in thousands of bourgeois papers. It is obvious that a social order which could produce such a crying contradiction is, in *effect*, a dictatorship of the capitalist class.

12. In such a state of things proletarian dictatorship is not only fully justified as a means of overthrowing the exploiters and of suppressing their resistance, but is also absolutely necessary for the mass of the workers as the only protection against capitalist dictatorship, which led to the war and will probably prepare a new war.

The main point which Socialists fail to understand, and which reveals their short-sightedness; their enslavement to bourgeois prejudices, their political treachery towards the proletariat, is that in capitalist society there can be no middle course between capitalist dictatorship and proletarian dictatorship. Any dream of a third course is merely the reactionary lament of the lower middle classes. This is plainly shown by the experience of the hundred years and more during which bourgeois democracy and the Labour movement have been developing in all advanced countries. Especially is it shown by the experiences of the last five years. The entire science of political economy and the whole gist of Marxism are eloquent of this truth, clearly demonstrating the economic necessity of capitalist dictatorship under any system of production for profit—a dictatorship which can only be destroyed by that class which has been developed, increased, paid and strengthened by and with the development of capitalism itself—that is, the proletarian class.

13. The other theoretical and political mistake made by Socialists consists in not understanding that the forms of democracy have inevitably changed in the course of centuries, beginning with its embryo in ancient times, in proportion as one ruling class was replaced by another. In the republics of ancient



Greece, in the mediæval towns, in the most developed capitalist States, democracy has had different forms, and has been of varied extent. It would be folly to assume that the greatest revolution in history, the first transfer of power from the hands of a minority of exploiters to the hands of the impoverished majority, could take place within the framework of the old bourgeois parliamentary democracy, without the most abrupt changes, or the creation of new forms and institutions for democracy, embodying the new social conditions of its existence.

14. Proletarian dictatorship is like the dictatorship of other classes in that it arises from the necessity of suppressing the armed resistance of the class that loses its political supremacy. The fundamental difference between proletarian dictatorship and that of other classes, such as the dictatorship of the great landowners of the Middle Ages and that of the capitalist class in all civilised capitalist countries, is simply that the two last-named dictatorships were a forcible suppression of the resistance of the majority of the population, the working masses, whereas proletarian dictatorship is a forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters—*i.e.* of an insignificant minority of the population—the landlords and capitalists. Hence it follows that proletarian dictatorship must inevitably bring with it not only a change in the forms and institutions of democracy, generally speaking, but also precisely such a change as will bring a hitherto undreamt-of extension *in practice* of the use made of democracy by those who have been oppressed by capitalism—*i.e.* by the working classes.

And, in fact, those forms of proletarian dictator-



ship already worked out in practice—*e.g.* the Soviet power in Russia, the Räte system in Germany, the Shop Stewards' Committees, and similar Soviet institutions in other countries, all signify, and *in practice* realise, for the working classes—*i.e.* for the enormous majority of the population—the practical possibility of democratic liberty and privileges to an extent never before known, even approximately, in the best democratic bourgeois republics.

The essence of the Soviet power consists in the fact that the continuous and unique basis of all State machinery and public authority is constituted by the mass organisations of exactly those classes which were oppressed by capitalism—the workers and semi-proletarians, peasants not exploiting hired labour and forced to sell at least a fraction of their own labour-power. These very masses, which even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, though enjoying equal rights in law, are still kept *in practice* from all participation in political life and from the enjoyment of all democratic liberties and rights, are now brought into permanent, unavoidable and therefore decisive touch with the democratic administration of the State.

15. The equality of all citizens, irrespective of sex, religion, race or nationality, which was always and everywhere promised, but never carried out, by the bourgeois democracy, and indeed never could be carried out under capitalism, is immediately and amply realised by the Soviet power, or, in other words, by proletarian dictatorship. Only the dictatorship of the workers can achieve this equality, because they have no private-property interest either

in production or in the struggle for distribution and redistribution.

16. The old bourgeois democracy and the parliamentary system were so organised as to keep the working classes at the greatest distance from the administrative machinery. But the Soviet power—*i.e.* the proletarian dictatorship—on the contrary, is so organised that it brings the masses of the working class in close touch with the administration. The same purpose is attained by the legislative and executive functions under the Soviet organisation of the State, and by substituting industrial units, such as works and factories, for territorial constituencies.

17. Not only under the monarchy, but even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, the army was an organ for oppression. Only Soviet Government, as the established State organisation of the classes oppressed by capitalism, is capable of abolishing the dependence of the army on bourgeois leadership, and of really amalgamating the proletariat with the army, of arming the proletariat and disarming the bourgeoisie, without which conditions the victory of Socialism would be impossible.

18. The Soviet organisation of the State is adapted for the leading part played by the proletariat as the class which has been most concentrated and united by capitalism. Experience gained from all revolutions and all movements of the enslaved classes, the experience of the world Socialist movement, teaches us that it is only the proletariat that is able to unite and carry with it the scattered and backward sections of the toiling and exploited population.

19. Only the Soviet organisation of the State is

able completely to break up and destroy the old, *i.e.*, bourgeois, bureaucratic and judicial apparatus which, under capitalism, existed, and was bound to exist, in the most democratic republics, and formed for the masses of the workers the greatest practical obstacle in the way of realising democracy. The Paris Commune took the first historic step along this path; the Soviet has taken the second.

20. The annihilation of the power of the State is the aim all Socialists have had in view, first and foremost, amongst them Marx. Without the realisation of this aim, true democracy—that is, liberty and equality—is unattainable. It can only be achieved by the Soviet or proletarian democracy, for this system prepares at the very outset for the “withering away” of any form of the State by bringing forward the mass organisations of the working people into a constant and absolute participation in State administration.

21. The complete bankruptcy, the complete failure of the Socialists assembled at Berne to understand the new, *i.e.*, proletarian democracy is especially manifested by the following incident. On 10th February 1919 M. Branting stated at Berne that the Conference of the Yellow International was at an end. On 11th February its members in Berlin published in *Die Freiheit* an appeal from the Independents to the proletariat. In this appeal the bourgeois character of the Scheidemann Government is admitted; it is reproached with wishing to abolish the Soviets, which are called “Träger und Schützer der Revolution” (the supporters and protectors of the revolution); and a proposal is made to legalise them, to give them State powers, to give them a suspensive

veto against the decisions of the National Assembly and the power to take a referendum.

Such a proposal as this proves the utter mental bankruptcy of the theorists who defended democracy and failed to understand its bourgeois character. The absurd attempt to combine the Soviet system—that is, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—with the Constituent Assembly or Dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, discloses the spiritual poverty of the Yellow Socialists and Social Democrats, their middle-class reactionary mentality, and their cowardly concessions to the irresistibly growing power of the new proletarian democracy.

22. The majority of the Yellow International at Berne, who condemned Bolshevism, but, dreading the mass of the workers, dared not formally vote for a condemnatory resolution, has acted quite correctly from the class standpoint. That majority is in complete agreement with the Russian Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries and the Scheidemann party in Germany. The Russian Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, who complain of being persecuted by the Bolsheviks, seek to conceal the fact that the persecutions are due to their taking part in the civil war on the side of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. In Germany, in precisely the same way, the Scheidemann party has joined in the civil war on the side of the bourgeoisie—*i.e.* against the working men.

It is therefore only natural that the majority of the participators in the Berne International should have voiced their condemnation of the Bolsheviks. In this was expressed, not the defence of “democracy pure and simple,” but the self-defence of men

who know that, in the civil war, they are on the side of the capitalist against the proletariat.

Seen from the standpoint of class, the decision arrived at by the majority is quite justified ; but the proletariat ought not to be intimidated by this fact, but rather face it openly and meet the consequences.

On the basis of these theses, and accepting the reports from representatives of widely different countries, the Congress of the Communist International declares the chief task of the Communist parties in countries where the Soviet system does not yet exist to be as follows:—

- (1) To enlighten the working classes as to the historical significance of the political and practical necessity of creating a new proletarian democracy to take the place of bourgeois democracy and parliamentarianism.
- (2) To spread and extend the Soviet system in all industrial concerns, in the army and navy, as well as amongst the workers on the land and smaller peasants ; and
- (3) To secure a firm, reliable Communist majority in the Soviet.



## IV

### THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL AND THE I.W.W.

THIS statement, which, so far as I know, has not previously been published, was written in January, 1920, by Zinoviev, on behalf of the Third International.

As will be seen, it is a document of considerable importance.

### THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONALE TO THE I.W.W.

#### *An Appeal of the Executive Committee of the Third Internationale at Moscow*

COMRADES AND FELLOW-WORKERS !—The Executive Committee of the Communist Internationale in session at Moscow, the heart of the Russian Revolution, greets the revolutionary American proletariat in the ranks of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Capitalism, ruined by the World War, unable any longer to contain within itself the tremendous forces it has created, is breaking down.

The hour of the working class has struck. The Social Revolution has begun, and here, on the Russian plain, the first vanguard battle is being fought.

History does not ask whether we like it or not, whether the workers are ready or not. Here is the opportunity. Take it—and the world will belong

to the workers ; leave it—there may not be another for generations.

Now is no time to talk of “building the new society within the shell of the old.” *The old society is cracking its shell. The workers must establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which alone can build the new society.*

An article in *The One Big Union Monthly*, your official organ, asks: “Why should we follow the Bolsheviks?” According to the writer, all that the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia has done is “to give the Russian people the vote.”

This is, of course, untrue. The Bolshevik Revolution has taken the factories, mills, mines, land and financial institutions out of the hands of the capitalists and transferred them to the *whole working class*.

We understand, and share with you, your disgust for the principles and tactics of the “yellow” Socialist politicians, who, all over the world, have discredited the very name of Socialism. Our aim is the same as yours—a commonwealth without State, without Government, without classes, in which the workers shall administer the means of production and distribution for the common benefit of all.

We address this letter to you, fellow-workers of the I.W.W., in recognition of your long and heroic service in the class war, of which you have borne the brunt in your own country, so that you may clearly understand our Communist principles and programme.

We appeal to you, as revolutionists, to rally to the Communist Internationale, born in the dawn of the World Social Revolution.

We call you to take the place to which your cour-

age and revolutionary experience entitles you, in the front ranks of the proletarian Red Army, fighting under the banner of Communism.

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### COMMUNISM AND THE I.W.W.

The American capitalist class is revealing itself in its true colours.

The constantly rising cost of living, the growing unemployment, the savage repression of all efforts of the workers to better their condition, the deportation and imprisonment of "Bolsheviks," the series of anti-strike laws, "criminal syndicalist" laws, "red flag" laws, and laws against propaganda advocating the "forcible overthrow of government and the unlawful destruction of property"—all these measures can have but one meaning for every intelligent worker.

Industrial slavery is as old as capitalism itself, and before that there were other forms of slavery for the workers.

*But now the capitalists of the world—the American capitalists as well as those of France, Italy, England, Germany, etc.—are planning to reduce the workers once for all to absolute and hopeless serfdom.*

Either this, or the dictatorship of the working class—there is no other alternative. And the workers must choose *now*.

Capitalism is making desperate efforts to reconstruct its shattered world. The workers must seize by force the power of the State and reconstruct society in their own interests.

*The Coming Slave State*

Before the American Civil War the negro slaves of the South were bound to the land. The industrial capitalists of the North, who needed a floating population to operate their factories, declared slavery to be an outrage, and abolished it by force. Now the industrial capitalists are attempting to bind the workers to the factories.

In every country during the World War it was practically forbidden for the workers to strike, or even to stop work. You will remember the "Work or Fight" laws in your own country.

And now that the war is over, what has happened? The cost of living has gone up and up, while the capitalists have actually tried to reduce wages. And when the workers, faced by starvation, are forced to strike, the whole power of the State is mobilised to drive them back to the machines. When the railway shopmen walked out the United States Marshal of California threatened to bring in Federal troops to force them to work. When the Railroad Brotherhoods demanded higher wages or the nationalisation of the railways, the President of the United States menaced them with the full-armed power of the Government. When the United Mine Workers laid down their tools thousands of soldiers occupied the mines, and the Federal Court issued the most sweeping injunction in history, forbidding the Union leaders from sending out the strike order or in any way assisting in conducting the strike, and forcibly preventing the payment of strike benefits. And, finally, the Attorney-General of the United States declared officially that the Government would

not permit strikes in "industries necessary to the community."

Judge Gary, head of the Steel Trust, can refuse the demand of the President of the United States to meet a committee of his workers, but when the steel-workers dare to go on strike for a living wage and the elementary right to join a union, they are called Bolsheviki and shot down in the streets by the Pennsylvania Cossacks.

And you, fellow-workers of the I.W.W., with your bitter memories of Everett, of Tulsa, of Wheatland, of Centralia, in which your comrades were butchered, with your thousands in prison—you who nevertheless must do the "dirty work" in the harvest fields, on the docks, in the forests—you must see plainly the process by which the capitalists, by means of their weapon, the State, are trying to inaugurate the Slave Society.

Everywhere the capitalists cry: "More production! More production!" In other words, the workers must do more work for less wages, so that their blood and sweat may be turned into gold to pay the war debts of the ruined capitalist world.

In order to accomplish this the workers must no longer have the right to leave their jobs; they must be forbidden to organise so that they may be able to wring concessions from the bosses, or profit by capitalist competition. At all costs the Labour Movement must be halted and broken.

To save the old system of exploitation the capitalists must unite and chain the workers to the machines of industry.



*Or the Social Revolution*

Will the capitalists be able to do this ?

They will, unless the workers declare war on the whole capitalist system, overthrow the capitalist Governments and set up a Government of the working class, which shall destroy the institution of capitalist private property and make all wealth the property of all the workers in common.

This is what the Russian workers have done, and this is the *only way* for the workers of other countries to free themselves from industrial slavery, and to make over the world so that the worker shall get *all he produces*, and nobody shall be able to make money out of the labour of other men.

But unless the workers of other countries rise against their own capitalists the Russian Revolution cannot last. The capitalists of the entire world, realising the danger of the example of Soviet Russia, have united to crush it. The Allies have quickly forgotten their hatred for Germany and have invited the German capitalists to join them in the common cause.

And the workers of other countries are beginning to understand. In Italy, Germany, France and England the tide of revolution is rising. In America, too, even the Conservative members of the A. F. of L. are realising that strikes for higher wages and better conditions don't mean anything, because the cost of living is always higher and higher. They have proposed all sorts of remedies, reforms, such as the Plumb Plan, nationalisation of mines, etc. They have founded a so-called "Labour Party," which works for municipal and Government ownership

of industry, more democratic electoral machinery, etc.

But these reforms wouldn't solve the problem, even if they could be achieved. *So long as the capitalist system exists some men will be making money out of the labour of others. All reforms of the present system of society simply fool the worker into believing that he isn't being robbed as much as he was before.*

The social revolution has begun, and the first battle is on in Russia. It will not wait for the workers to experiment with reforms. The capitalists have already destroyed the Hungarian Soviet Republic. If they can dominate and break the Labour movement in other countries, then will follow the industrial Slave State.

*Before it is too late* the class-conscious workers of the world must prepare to meet the shock of the capitalist assault, to attack and destroy capitalism and root it out of the world.

### *The Capitalist State*

The war and its aftermath have revealed with startling clearness the real function of the capitalist State—with its legislatures, courts of justice, police, armies and bureaucrats.

The State is used to defend and strengthen the power of the capitalists and to oppress the workers. This is particularly true in the United States, whose constitution was framed by the great merchants, speculators and land-owners, with the deliberate purpose of protecting their class interests against the majority of the people.

*At the present time the Government of the United*

*States is openly acting as the weapon of the capitalists against the workers.*

The I.W.W. should realise this more clearly than any other body of workers, for it has been savagely persecuted by the Government—its leaders imprisoned, its papers suppressed, its members deported, jailed on false charges, refused bail, tortured, its headquarters closed and its propaganda illegal in many states.

Any worker can see this fact with his own eyes. All the people vote for governors, mayors, judges and sheriffs, but in time of strike the governor calls in the militia to protect the scabs, the mayor orders the police to beat up and arrest pickets, the judge imprisons the workers for “rioting,” or “disturbing the peace,” and the sheriff hires *thugs as deputies*, to break the strike.

Capitalist society all together presents a solid front against the worker. The priest tells the worker to be contented ; the Press curses him for a “Bolshevik” ; the policeman arrests him ; the court sentences him to jail ; the sheriff seizes his furniture for debt ; and the poorhouse takes his wife and children.

In order to destroy capitalism the workers must first wrest the State power out of the hands of the capitalist class. They must not only *seize* this power, but *abolish the old capitalist State apparatus entirely*.

For the experience of revolutions has shown that the workers cannot take hold of the State machine and use it for their own purposes—such as the Yellow Socialist politicians propose to do. The capitalist State is built to serve capitalism, and that is all it can do, no matter who is running it.

And in place of the capitalist State the workers

must build their own *workers' State*, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

### *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*

Many members of the I.W.W. do not agree with this. They are against "the State in general." They propose to overthrow the capitalist State and to establish in its place immediately the Industrial Commonwealth.

The Communists are also opposed to the "State." They also wish to abolish it—to substitute for the government of men the administration of things.

But unfortunately this cannot be done immediately. The destruction of the capitalist State does not mean that capitalism automatically and immediately disappears. The capitalists still have arms, which must be taken away from them ; they are still supported by hordes of loyal bureaucrats, managers, superintendents, foremen and trained men of all sorts, who will sabotage industry—and these must be persuaded or compelled to serve the working class ; they still have army officers who can betray the revolution, preachers who can raise superstitious fears against it, teachers and orators who can misrepresent it to the ignorant, thugs who can be hired to discredit it by evil behaviour, newspaper editors who can deceive the people with floods of lies, and "yellow" Socialists and Labour fakers who prefer capitalist "democracy" to the revolution. All these people must be sternly repressed.

To break down the capitalist State, to crush capitalist resistance and disarm the capitalist class, to confiscate capitalist property and turn it over to



the *whole working class in common*—for all these tasks a Government is necessary—a State, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, in which the workers, through their Soviets, can uproot the capitalist system with an iron hand.

This is exactly what exists in Soviet Russia to-day.

*But this Dictatorship of the Proletariat is only temporary.* We Communists also want to abolish the State. The State can only exist as long as there is class struggle. The function of the Proletarian Dictatorship is to abolish the capitalist class as a class ; in fact, to do away with all class divisions of every kind. And when this condition is reached, then *the Proletarian Dictatorship, the State, automatically disappears*—to make way for an industrial administrative body, which will be something like the General Executive Board of the I.W.W.

In a recent leaflet Mary Marcy argues that although the I.W.W. does not theoretically recognise the necessity for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, it will be forced to do so *in fact* at the time of the revolution, in order to suppress the capitalist counter-revolution.

This is true, but unless the I.W.W. acknowledges beforehand the necessity of the Workers' State, and prepares for it, there will be confusion and weakness at a time when firmness and swift action are imperative.

### *The Workers' State*

What will be the form of the Workers' State ?

We have before us the example of the Russian Soviet Republic, whose structure, in view of the conflicting reports printed in other countries, it may be useful to describe briefly here.



The unit of government is the local Soviet, or Council, of Workers', Red Army and Peasants' Deputies.

The city Workers' Soviet is made up as follows :—each factory elects one delegate for a certain number of workers, and each local union elects delegates. These delegates are elected according to political parties—or, if the workers wish it, as individual candidates.

The Red Army delegates are chosen by military units.

For the peasants, each village has its local Soviet, which sends delegates to the township Soviet, which in turn elects to the county Soviet, and this to the provincial Soviet.

Nobody who employs labour for profit can vote.

Every six months the city and provincial Soviets elect delegates to the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, which is the supreme governing body of the country. This Congress decides upon the policies which are to govern the country for six months and then elects a Central Executive Committee of two hundred, which is to carry out these policies. The Congress also elects the Cabinet—the Council of People's Commissars, who are heads of Government departments—or People's Commissariats.

The People's Commissars can be recalled at any time by the Central Executive Committee. The members of all Soviets can be recalled very easily, and at any time, by their constituents.

These Soviets are not only *legislative* bodies, but also *executive* organs. Unlike your Congress, they do not make the laws and leave them to the president to carry out, but the members carry out the laws

themselves ; and there is no Supreme Court to say whether or not these laws are "constitutional."

Between the All-Russia Congresses of Soviets the Central Executive Committee is the *supreme power* in Russia. It meets at least every two months, and in the meanwhile the Council of People's Commissars directs the country, while the members of the Central Executive Committee go to work in the various Government departments.

### *The Organisation of Production and Distribution*

In Russia the workers are organised in industrial unions, all the workers in each industry belonging to one union. For example, in a factory making metal products, even the carpenters and painters are members of the Metal Workers' Union. Each factory is a Local Union, and the Shop Committee elected by the workers is its Executive Committee.

The All-Russia Central Executive Committee of the federated Unions is elected by the annual Trade Union Convention. A Scale Committee elected by the Convention fixes the wages of all categories of workers.

With very few exceptions, all important factories in Russia have been nationalised and are now the property of all the workers in common. The business of the Unions is therefore no longer to fight the capitalist, but to *run industry*.

Hand in hand with the Unions works the Department of Labour of the Soviet Government, whose chief is the People's Commissar of Labour, elected by the Soviet Congress, with the approval of the Unions.

In charge of the economic life of the country is the

elected Supreme Council of People's Economy, divided into departments, such as metal department, chemical department, etc., each one headed by experts and workers, appointed with the approval of the Unions by the Supreme Council of People's Economy.

In each factory production is carried on by a committee consisting of three members : a representative of the Shop Committee, a representative of the Central Executive Committee of the Unions, and a representative of the Supreme Council of People's Economy.

### *Democratic Centralisation*

The Unions are thus a *branch of the government*—and this government is the *most highly centralised government that exists*.

It is also the most democratic government in history. For all the organs of government are in constant touch with the worker masses and constantly sensitive to their will. Moreover, the local Soviets all over Russia have complete autonomy to manage their own local affairs, provided they carry out the national policies laid down by the Soviet Congress. Also, the Soviet Government represents *only the workers*, and cannot help but act in the workers' interests.

Many members of the I.W.W. are opposed to centralisation, because they do not think it can be democratic. But where there are great masses of people it is impossible to register the will of individuals ; only the will of majorities can be registered, and in Soviet Russia the government is administered only for the common good of the working class.

The private property of the capitalist class, in order to become the *social* property of the workers, cannot be turned over to individuals or groups of individuals. It must become the property of *all in common*, and a centralised authority is necessary to accomplish this change.

The industries, too, which supply the needs of all the people, are not the *concern* only of the workers in each industry, but of *all in common*, and must be administered for the benefit of all. Moreover, modern industry is so complicated and interdependent that in order to operate most economically and with the greatest production it must be subject to one general scheme and one central management.

The Revolution must be defended against the formidable assaults of the combined forces of capitalism. Vast armies must be raised, drilled, equipped and directed. This means centralisation. Soviet Russia has for two years almost alone fought off the massed attacks of the capitalist world. How could the Red Army, more than two million strong, have been formed without central directing authority?

The capitalist class has a strongly centralised organisation, which permits its full strength to be hurled against the scattered and divided sections of the working class. The class war is war. To overthrow capitalism the workers must be a military force, with its General Staff—but this General Staff elected and controlled by the workers.

In time of strike every worker knows that there must be a Strike Committee—a centralised organ to conduct the strike, whose orders must be obeyed—although this committee is elected and controlled by the rank and file. *Soviet Russia is on strike against*



*the whole Capitalist world. The Social Revolution is a general strike against the whole capitalist system. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat is the Strike Committee of the Social Revolution.*

Probably the coming proletarian revolutions in America and other countries will develop new forms of organisation. The Bolsheviki do not pretend that they have said the final word in the Social Revolution. But the experience of two years of workers' government in Russia is naturally of the greatest importance and should be closely studied by the workers of other countries.

### *Politics*

The word "politics" is to many members of the I.W.W. like a red flag to a bull—or a capitalist. Politics, to them, means simply politicians—usually "yellow" Socialist candidates trying to catch votes to elect them to some comfortable office, where they can comfortably forget all about the workers.

These "anti-political" fellow-workers oppose the Communists because they call themselves a "political party," and sometimes take part in political campaigns.

This is using the word "politics" in too narrow a sense. One of the principles upon which the I.W.W. was founded is expressed in the saying of Karl Marx: "*Every class struggle is a political struggle.*" That is to say, every struggle of the workers against the capitalists is a struggle of the workers for the *political* power—the State power.

This is the sense in which we Communists also use the word "politics."



The "yellow" Socialists believe that they can gradually gain this political power by using the political machinery of the capitalist State to win reforms, and when they have elected a majority of the members of Congress and the Legislatures, and the president, governors, mayors and sheriffs, they can proceed to use the State power to legislate capitalism peacefully out and the Industrial Commonwealth in.

This leads the "yellow" Socialists to preach all sorts of reforms of the capitalist system, draws to their ranks small capitalists and political adventurers of all kinds, and finally causes them to make deals and compromises with the capitalist class.

The I.W.W. does not believe in this and *neither do the Communists.*

We Communists do not think that it is possible to capture the State power by using the political machinery of the capitalist State. The State being the particular weapon of the capitalist class, its machinery is naturally constructed so as to defend and strengthen the power of capitalism. Capitalist control of all agencies moulding public opinion—Press, schools, churches and *Labour Fakers*, capitalist control of the workers' political conduct through control of their means of living, make it extremely improbable that the workers under the present capitalist "democracy" could ever legally elect a government devoted to their interests.

And at this time, when the capitalist class the world over is launching a desperate campaign of repression against all conscious working-class organisations, it is unthinkable.

But even if it were possible for the workers to win

the State power by means of the political machinery, the capitalist State could never be used to introduce the Industrial Commonwealth. The real source of capitalist power lies in *capitalist ownership and control of the means of production*. The capitalist State exists for the purpose of protecting and extending this ownership and control—it cannot therefore be used to destroy it.

So far the Communists and the I.W.W. are in accord. The capitalist State must be attacked by *direct action*. This, in the correct meaning of the word, is also *political* action, for it has a *political* aim—the seizure of State power.

The I.W.W. proposes to attain this end by the General Strike. The Communists go farther. History indicates clearly that the General Strike is not enough. The capitalists have arms—and the experience with White Guards in Russia, Finland and Germany proves that they have sufficient organisation and training to use these arms against the workers. Moreover, the capitalists possess stores of food, which enable them to hold out longer than the workers, *always on the verge of actual want*.

The Communists also advocate the General Strike, but they add that it must turn into *armed insurrection*. Both the General Strike and the insurrection are forms of *political action*.

### *Revolutionary Parliamentarism*

If this is so, if the Communists do not believe in capturing State power by means of the ballot-box, why do the Communist parties participate in elections and nominate candidates for office?

The question of whether or not Communists should participate in elections is of secondary importance. Some Communist organisations do, others do not. But those who *do* act on the political field do so only for *propaganda*. Political campaigns give an opportunity for revolutionists to speak to the working class, pointing out the class character of the State and *their* class interests as workers. They enable them to show the futility of reforms, to demonstrate the real interests which dominate the capitalist—and “yellow” Socialist—political parties, and to point out why the entire capitalist system must be overthrown.

Communists elected to Congress or the legislatures have as their function to make propaganda; to ceaselessly expose the real nature of the capitalist State, to obstruct the operations of capitalist government and show their class character, to explain the futility of all capitalist reform measures, etc. In the halls of the legislative assembly, against the sounding-board of the nation, the Communist can show up capitalist brutality and call the workers to revolt.

Karl Liebknecht showed what a Communist in the Parliament can do. His words, spoken in the German Reichstag, were heard around the world.

Others in Russia, in Sweden (Höglund) and in other countries have done the same things.

The most common objection to electing candidates to capitalist legislatures is that, no matter how good revolutionists they are, they will invariably be corrupted by their environment and will betray the workers.

This belief is born of long experience, chiefly with Socialist politicians and *Labour Fakers*. But we

Communists say that *a really revolutionary Party will elect real revolutionists, and will know how to keep them under its control.*

Many members of the I.W.W. are bitterly opposed to making *any* use of legislatures and other Government institutions for purposes of propaganda. But the I.W.W. as an organisation has often used them. In the Lawrence Strike of 1912 the I.W.W. made good use *even of Victor Berger, the Socialist Congressman*, who advertised the strike and the I.W.W. on the floor of the House of Representatives. William D. Haywood, Vincent St John and many other I.W.W. leaders voluntarily testified before the Industrial Relations Commission of the United States Government, using this method to make propaganda for their organisation. But the most striking example of using the political machinery of the State for purposes of propaganda occurred in 1918, when the Federal Court in Chicago was turned into a three-months-long I.W.W. agitation meeting—extremely valuable for us—by the one hundred I.W.W. leaders on trial there.

These are all cases of using the political machinery of the capitalist State to make revolutionary propaganda among the masses. This method of propaganda should be used as circumstances dictate—as should parliamentary action. *No* weapon should be totally condemned.

The special and particular business of the I.W.W. is to train the workers for the seizure and management of industry. The special function of the Communist political party is to train the workers for the capture of political power and the administration of the Proletarian Dictatorship. All workers should



at the same time be members of the revolutionary industrial union of their industry, and of the political party which advocates Communism.

*The Social Revolution and the Future Society*

The aim of the I.W.W. is "to build the new society within the shell of the old." This means, to organise the workers so thoroughly that at a given time the capitalist system will be burst asunder, and the Industrial Commonwealth, fully developed, shall take its place.

Such an act requires the organisation and discipline of the great majority of the workers. Before the war there was reason to believe that this might be feasible—although in the fourteen years of its history the I.W.W. had been able to organise comparatively only a small fraction of the American workers.

But at the present time such a plan is Utopian. Capitalism is breaking down, the Social revolution is upon us and *history will not wait until the majority of the workers are organised 100 per cent. according to the plan of the I.W.W. or any other organisation.* There is no longer before us the prospect of normal industrial development which would alone allow the carrying out of such a plan. The war has hurled the peoples of the world into the great cataclysm, and they must plan for *immediate action*—not for the working out of schemes which would take years to accomplish.

The new society is not to be built, as we thought, within the shell of the capitalist system. We cannot wait for that. *The Social Revolution is here.* And when the workers have overthrown capitalism and



have crushed all attempts to re-establish it, then, at their leisure, through their Soviet State, they can build the new society in freedom.

In the face of the social revolution, what is the immediate important work of the industrial workers of the world ?

They, as the most important organisation based on revolutionary industrial unionism in America, should take the initiative in trying to establish a basis for the uniting in one organisation of all unions which have a class-conscious revolutionary character, of all workers who accept the class struggle—such as the W.I.I.U., the One Big Union and certain insurgent Unions in the A. F. of L. This is no time to quibble about a name, or minor questions of organisation. The essential task is to draw together all workers capable of revolutionary mass action in time of crisis.

They, as revolutionists, should not repel the attempts of the American Communists to come to an agreement with them for common revolutionary action. The political party and the economic organisation must go forward shoulder to shoulder toward the common goal—the abolition of capitalism by means of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the formation of Soviets and the disappearance of classes and the State.

The Communist Internationale holds out to the I.W.W. the hand of brotherhood.

G. ZINOVIEV,  
*President of the Central  
Executive Committee.*

*January, 1920.*

## V

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